



M. L.



GEN

ALLEN COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY



3 1833 01707 8673

Watts

Gc 977.202 V74sm

Smith, Hubbard Madison, 1820  
-1907.

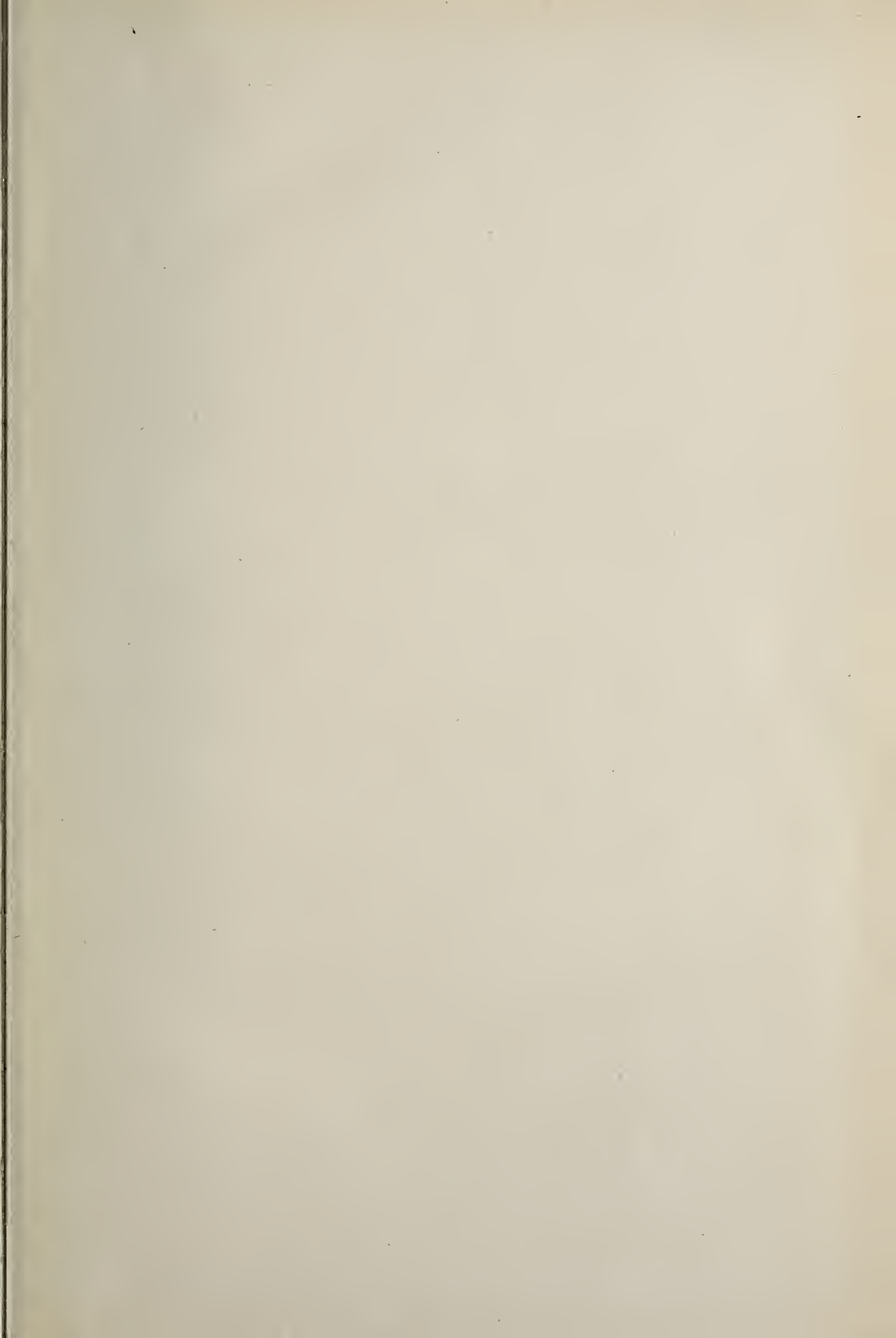
nd

Historical sketches of Old  
Vincennes, founded in 1732

✓







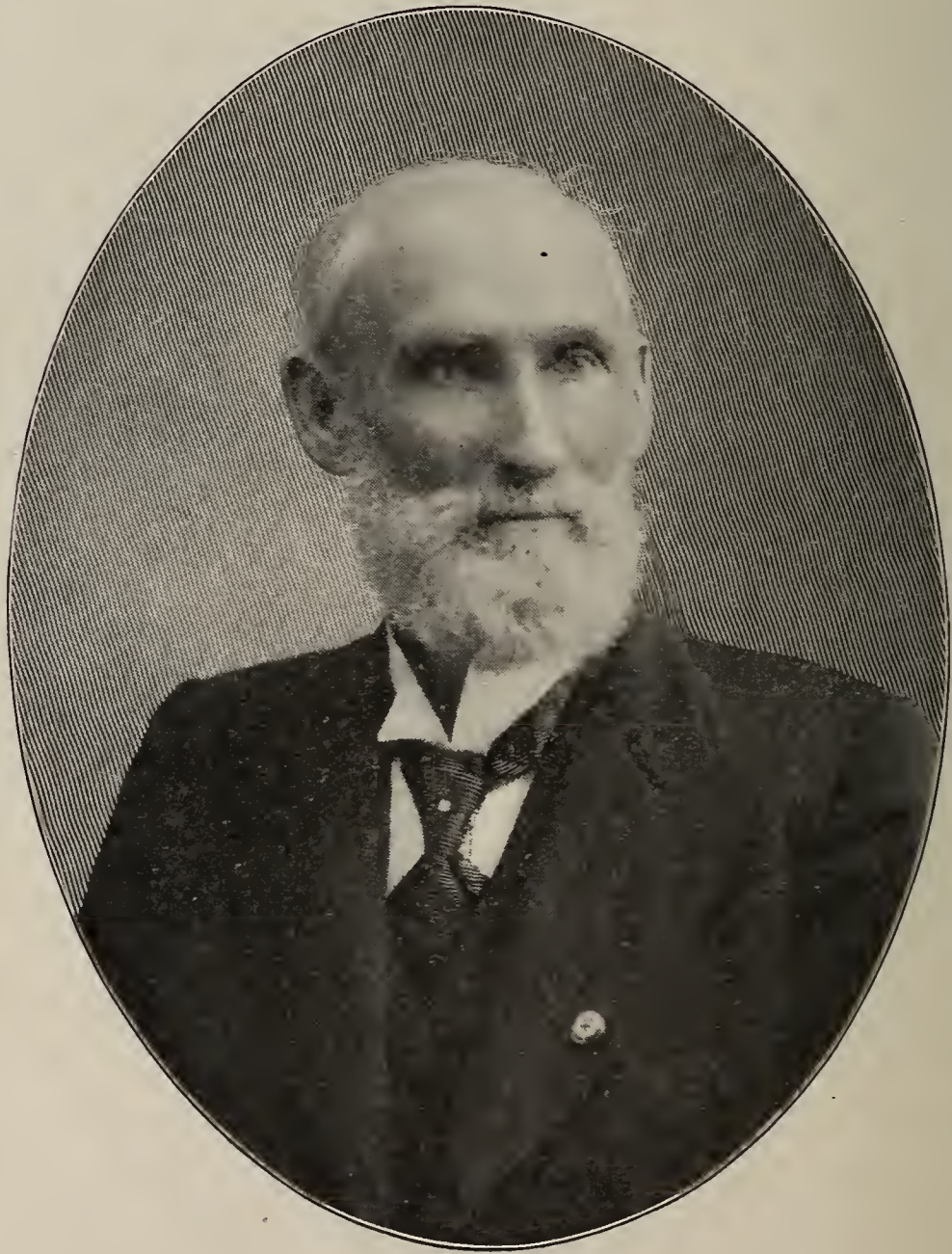




Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2017

Presented to Col. George McCoy and wife,  
by the daughters of the Author.

January 8<sup>th</sup> 1914.



Hubbard Madison Smith M.D.

1820

1908.

HISTORICAL SKETCHES

OF

# Old Vincennes

*FOUNDED IN 1732*

ITS

*INSTITUTIONS AND CHURCHES, EMBRACING COLLATERAL  
INCIDENTS AND BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF  
MANY PERSONS AND EVENTS CON-  
NECTED THEREWITH*

---

BY

HUBBARD MADISON SMITH, M. D.

---

*SECOND EDITION*

---

VINCENNES, INDIANA

February, 1903

1  
 2  
 3  
 4  
 5  
 6  
 7  
 8  
 9  
 10  
 11  
 12  
 13  
 14  
 15  
 16  
 17  
 18  
 19  
 20  
 21  
 22  
 23  
 24  
 25  
 26  
 27  
 28  
 29  
 30  
 31  
 32  
 33  
 34  
 35  
 36  
 37  
 38  
 39  
 40  
 41  
 42  
 43  
 44  
 45  
 46  
 47  
 48  
 49  
 50  
 51  
 52  
 53  
 54  
 55  
 56  
 57  
 58  
 59  
 60  
 61  
 62  
 63  
 64  
 65  
 66  
 67  
 68  
 69  
 70  
 71  
 72  
 73  
 74  
 75  
 76  
 77  
 78  
 79  
 80  
 81  
 82  
 83  
 84  
 85  
 86  
 87  
 88  
 89  
 90  
 91  
 92  
 93  
 94  
 95  
 96  
 97  
 98  
 99  
 100

---

Copyright, 1902.  
 HUBBARD MADISON SMITH, M. D.

---



---

*Press of Wm. B. Burford,  
 Indianapolis.*



Table of Contents.

1135560

CHAPTER I.

	PAGE
First Missions and Settlement of Vincennes .....	11

CHAPTER II.

Campaign and Capture of Fort Sackville by George Rogers Clark.....	32
--	----

CHAPTER III.

Date of Erection of Fort by Morgan Sieur de Vincennes —Fort's Removal—Camp Knox .....	57
--	----

CHAPTER IV.

Establishment of First Courts—Knox County Named— First Court House Built—Town of Vincennes Organ- ized—Old Town Hall Built—City Chartered—Its Commons Lands—Officers of City .....	74
---	----

CHAPTER V.

Schools: University of Vincennes—St. Gabriel's College —St. Rose Academy—Common Schools—Sisters of Providence—Parochial .....	91
---	----

CHAPTER VI.

Churches: St. Xavier Catholic—St. John's German Cath- olic—Presbyterian—Methodist Episcopal—Episcopal —Baptist—Christian—Cumberland Presbyterian— German-Protestant—St. John's Lutheran—St. John's Evangelical .....	117
--	-----

## CHAPTER VII.

	PAGE
Biographical Sketches: Francois Morgan Sieur de Vincennes — Colonel George Rogers Clark — Reverend Pierre Gibault—Colonel Francis Vigo—Francis Busseron .....	142

## CHAPTER VIII.

Biographical Sketches, Continued: Governor William Henry Harrison—General Zachary Taylor—John Duffield Hay—Nathaniel Ewing—Samuel Judah—Nicholas Smith—Cyrus M. Allen—John Wise—Andrew Gardner—L. L. Watson—J. L. Coleman—William Burtch—John Law—John Francis Bayard .....	168
---	-----

## CHAPTER IX.

Societies: Masonic—I. O. O. F.—Knights of Pythias—Grand Army of the Republic—Ben-Hur Lodge—Elks—Red Men—Catholic Knights—Medical—Bar Association .....	207
--	-----

## CHAPTER X.

Miscellaneous: The Press—University Library—Catholic Church Library—City Library—Banks—Board of Trade—Epidemics—Indian Mounds.....	225
--	-----

## CHAPTER XI.

Governor Harrison's Residence—His Pow-wow with Tecumseh—Battle of Tippecanoe .....	245
--	-----

## CHAPTER XII.

Clubs: Pastime—Fortnightly—Gibault Reading—Palace. Old Houses: American Hotel—Prison—Cotton Factory—Bonner Mansion—Park-Wise Mansion ..	258
---	-----

## CHAPTER XIII.

Facts and Legends: Population—First Theatre—The Old Ferry—Primeval Conveyances—The "Old Trysting Boulder"—"Alice of Old Vincennes"—Addendum..	273
---	-----

## Table of Illustrations.

---

	PAGE
Hubbard Madison Smith, M. D.....	Frontispiece
Fort Sackville .....	58
Map showing Location of Fort Knox after its removal.....	67
Camp Knox.....	71
Last Territorial Legislative Meeting Hall .....	73
Old Town Hall .....	79
John Badollet .....	82
Vincennes University .....	90
Old St. Xavier Catholic Church .....	118
New St. Xavier Catholic Cathedral .....	125
Presbyterian Church .....	127
Methodist Episcopal Church .....	132
General George Rogers Clark .....	145
Reverend Pierre Gibault .....	156
Colonel Francis Vigo .....	161
Governor William Henry Harrison .....	169
General Zachary Taylor.....	174
Nathaniel Ewing.....	184
John Wise .....	187
Park-Wise Residence.....	188
Samuel Judah .....	190
Cyrus M. Allen .....	201
Samuel Bayard .....	204
Old American Hotel .....	250
Old Cotton Mill .....	254
Governor William Henry Harrison's Residence.....	259

# Letter of Introduction.

---

The lethargy that has possessed the people in regard to the incidents connected with the early history of Vincennes seems to have been happily dispelled by that superb historical romance entitled, "Alice of Old Vincennes," by the lamented and gifted author, Maurice Thompson; and, from general inquiry, a contribution on the subject, it is presumed, would be acceptable to many who take an interest in it.

No other part of the territory of our vast domain can claim greater interest than it does, considering the contentions for it, and the momentous results that have followed its conquest. Hence, believing this to be an opportune time to give the public a succinct and as correct a history as is possible with the materials known to exist at this late day, I have ventured to assume the task.

In dealing with the main subject, collateral matters more or less connected have been treated of and statistical information given that should be interesting to all Indianians, and more especially to Vincennes people. The mists of time have been gradually covering from sight and memory many interesting views and facts of early years in this region, and, if not rescued now and made a matter of record, they will soon be lost forever. If, in my efforts to winnow from tradition and isolated records I have rescued but a few facts and items of interest from oblivion, I will consider my task of research not to have been in vain.

The author appreciates the encouraging words from friends in his labor to settle points of doubtful authenticity regarding Old Vincennes; and he is especially under obligations to the Hon. Charles G. McCord, for facts gleaned from the records of our Courts, and Hon. Robert W. Miers, M. C., and ~~Ben~~ Charles M. Staley, of the Engineering Department United States Army, Washington, D. C., for facts in the Government's archives, and to the Hon. Jacob P. Dunn, Secretary Indiana Historical Society, for data relating to the early settlement of Vincennes, through Hon. John K. Gowdy, United States Consul-General, Paris, France; and to Mr. Elbridge Gardner, an octogenarian and native of Vincennes; Mrs. Elizabeth Andre, now in her ninety-third year, and Mr. Vital Bouchie, in his ninety-second year of age.

HUBBARD M. SMITH, M. D.

Vincennes, Ind., October, 1902.



## Preface.

---

The attempt to give in a succinct manner a truthful history of Vincennes from its first settlement has been a difficult one, since so few authentic records of facts exist; and any one essaying it must rely upon facts gleaned here and there, and from uncertain traditions to make a connected whole. This statement should not be wondered at, since more than a century and a half of time presents itself as the field from which the grains of truth must be gathered, often from the chaff of hearsay. Hence, the task at the start assumed herculean proportions, and, if mistakes are not made, the gleaner must be considered infallible as to opportunities in gathering facts. And, if preconceived opinions are antagonized and cherished mythical images be shattered by stern and rugged facts, the possessors of them must draw consolation from the thought that myths of traditions are ephemeral, while truths must abide.

---

## Preface to Second Edition.

---

Having been complimented by the exhaustion of the first edition of my book in a few weeks, and having frequent calls for it for public and private libraries, at the solicitation of friends I present the edition now issued, hoping it may meet with like public favor.

THE AUTHOR.

Vincennes, Ind., February, 1903.

## Letter of Dedication.

---

*To the Vincennes Historical Society:*

Nearly three years ago you were kind and complimentary enough to invite me to read a paper before your body on the history of Old Vincennes. My reply was that I was then not familiar enough with the subject to furnish you any valuable information about it, but that I would write a paper on "Vincennes and Its People as I Knew Them Fifty Years Ago," which I did; and the effort was flatteringly received and published by the local press. The commendation given that paper was the inspiration for an investigation of the founding of the town, and the result has been the production of the present volume, after much thought and research. It embraces, I believe, valuable information and incidents not hitherto published in consecutive and permanent form suitable for libraries, and which I now take the liberty of dedicating to your honorable body.

Your most obedient co-worker,

HUBBARD MADISON SMITH, M. D.

Vincennes, Ind., October, 1902.



## Chapter I.

### OLD VINCENNES—ITS SETTLEMENT.

The historian in his disposition must be patient of labor, persevering, inflexible in his love of truth and justice, and free from every prejudice.—*Mosheim.*

VINCENNES is situated on the site of the old Che-pe-ko-ke, Piankeshaw Indian village, on the east bank of the Wabash river, one hundred and fifty-one miles east of St. Louis, Mo.; one hundred and ninety-two miles west from Cincinnati, Ohio; one hundred and seventeen miles southwest of Indianapolis, and about fifty miles from Evansville, on the Ohio river, south, and Terre Haute on the Upper Wabash to the north; being so centrally located between the leading cities named, studded with railroads reaching in all directions, it occupies an ideal location for a large city in the coming near future.

The site on which Vincennes is situated seems to have been a favorite location for the habitation of the human race for many hundred years, its beginning reaching far back into the distant past, and how many will never be known. From the heaps of shells, some even from the seashore, and skeletons found in this vicinity, some historians have suggested that the first race of inhabitants here were the Fishers, and the next the Mound Builders, as is evidenced by the many mounds in the immediate vicinity, and others scattered over a large area in the county. Then followed the Red Men, who continued to

occupy it until dispossessed by the stronger, more enlightened Caucasian race.

This location, being so ideal in character, surrounded by beautiful forests, wide-spreading prairies, abounding in game, from grouse to buffalo, and dotted over in the summer season with its myriads of gorgeous flowers, like the stars of the firmament; broad savannas bordered by the gently flowing crystal waters of the placid Wabash river, swarming with the finny tribe, was well calculated to appeal strongly to less æsthetic tastes than those characteristic of the higher civilization of the Europeans. But it is not the purpose of the author to try to solve the question of the time of the first occupation of this place prehistorically, and by whom, but to seek a solution of the questions, when was the first advent of the white race to the Piankeshaw Indian village, Che-pe-ko-ke,\* and the time when Vincennes was founded.

The date of the first settlement or founding of Vincennes has been a mooted question for many years, owing to the inaccessibility of the earliest records concerning the subject, they being located in Paris, France, and the number of years intervening since its occurrence. The discussions have been many, often based upon misconceptions received from various sources of information, hence traditions have been, in many instances, recorded as veritable history. Then, in seeking solutions of the problem presented, recorded facts must be relied on as far as they exist, as bases, aided by reason and corroborating circumstances germane to the question, and by legitimate inferences.

---

\*Meaning Brushwood, in English.

In discussing the first settlement of Vincennes we must enter upon it dispassionately and without prejudice produced by preconceived opinions formed on misinformation, and statements made should not rest upon the *ipse dixit* of any one, but should have for their bases well-authenticated facts, not traditions.

“To hold their claim upon the Mississippi valley the French, in 1702, determined to establish some posts along the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, and M. Juchereau did erect a fort at the mouth of the Ohio. Some writers have attempted to claim that Vincennes was the site of this fort, but the records oppose such a view.”\*

In his Memoirs (to the French Government) in 1702 De Iberville asked possession of the River Ohio, and that the Illinois Indians might be colonized. He said: “The Illinois, having been removed, I could cause it to be occupied by the Mascoutens and Kickapoos. Very little of these removals occurred as planned, but one tribe of the Mascoutens came to the mouth of the River Ohio and settled near the fort.”†

After Lamotte Cadillac founded a permanent settlement at Detroit and about the close of the year 1702 the Sieur Juchereau, a Canadian officer, assisted by the missionary, Mermet, made an attempt to establish a post on the Ohio near the mouth of the river.‡ The contentions that Vincennes was the objective point of Sieur Juchereau and his Canadian settlers is disproved in many ways, the error occurring through early writers in using the name of the Wabash for the Ohio river. Judge Law, in his his-

---

\* W. H. Smith's Hist. Ind., p. 12.

† Minn. Hist. Society, Vol. I, pp. 341-343.

‡ Dillon Hist. Ind., p. 21.



torical sketch of early Vincennes, made this mistake by misinterpreting the letter of November 9, 1712, written by Father Marest, then stationed at Kaskaskia, in which he said: "The French, having lately established a fort on the River Wabash, demanded a missionary, and Father Mermet was sent them."\* That this letter referred to the Ohio, instead of the Wabash river, will be demonstrated. This statement of Law conflicts with the claim of the authors claiming 1702 as the time that a missionary first came to this point with Juchereau. If one had come in 1702, why the request of Marest to send a missionary in 1712, when it is said Mermet came here? From the fact that up to the middle of the eighteenth century the Wabash river was regarded as the main stream and the Ohio as its tributary, much confusion follows in describing localities. In alluding to this matter of locations of Juchereau's posts, established in 1702 (at the mouth of the Ohio river), Dunn says: "It is unquestionable. Its complete history is preserved in contemporary official documents. It was abandoned three years after it was established and existed only as a landmark."†

The Mascoutens and the Prairie Indians, having been gathered about the fort of Juchereau, Father Mermet was sent to them at the instance of Charlevoix by Father Marest, who was in charge of the mission at Kaskaskia. He immediately engaged in the work of spreading the Gospel among the Indians. The following is Father Mermet's statement of his labors: "The way I took was to confound, in the presence of the whole tribe, the Char-

---

\* Law's Hist. Vincennes, p. 12.

† Dunn Ind. Mag. West. Hist., Vol. XII, p. 579. Magazine of Amer. Hist., XXII, p. 143.

latan, whose Manitou or Great Spirit which he worshipped was a buffalo. After leading him insensibly to the avowal that it was not a buffalo that he worshipped, but the Manitou or Spirit which animated all buffaloes, which heals the sick and has all power, I asked him if all other beasts, the bear, for instance, and which some of his nation worshipped, was not equally inhabited by a 'Manitou,' which was under the earth?" "Without doubt," said the grand medicine chief. "If this is so," said the missionary, "*men* ought to have a Manitou who inhabits them." "Nothing more certain," said the medicine man. "Then, ought not that to convince you," said the Father, pushing his argument, "that you are not very reasonable? For, if man upon the earth is master of all animals, if he kills them, if he eats them, does it not follow that the Manitou which inhabits him must necessarily have a mastery over all other Manitous? Why, then, do you not make him, instead of the Manitou of the buffalo and bear, your Manitou when you are sick?" "This reasoning," says the Father, "disconcerted the Charlatan," but, like other good logic in the world, I am sorry to add, in his own words, this was all the effect it produced.\*

While Father Mermet was at this post, established at the mouth of the Ohio river, "a pestilential malady soon broke out among the Indians who were settled around it, and, notwithstanding the kind offices of the missionary, they died in great numbers. With the hope of arresting the progress of the fatal epidemic, the Indians determined to make a great sacrifice of dogs. Forty of these animals, innocent as they were of the epidemic, to satisfy their

---

\* Dillon's Hist. Ind., pp. 21, 22.

suspicious Manitou, were immolated and carried on poles in solemn procession around the fort. But as their orgies were of no avail, the Indians soon moved away from the place of mortality. Mermet retired to the village of Kaskaskia and Sieur Juchereau abandoned the sickly post.”\*

This account of the labors of Father Mermet with the Mascoutens, given by himself, corresponds with what Father Charlevoix said in relation to the former's labors with the Mascoutens at the mouth of the Ohio, at Sieur Juchereau's post, who made a trip down the Mississippi from Kaskaskia in 1721. He said: “The labors among the Mascoutens met with little success. The Sieur Juchereau, a Canadian, had begun a post at the mouth of the Ohio, which emptied into the Mississippi, constituting the shorter and most convenient communication between Canada and Louisiana, and a great many of the Indians had settled here. To retain them he had persuaded Father Mermet, one of the Illinois missionaries, to endeavor to gain them for Christ, but the missionary found an indocile tribe, exceedingly superstitious, and despotically ruled by medicine men.”†

The testimony given by this distinguished and well-informed Father, independent of any other authenticated evidence, ought to be considered enough to give a quietus to the misstatements in relation to the alleged settlement that Sieur Juchereau established a mission or builded a fort on the site of Vincennes in 1702.

In ascertaining the time when Vincennes was founded the confusion existing in relation to the names of the two

---

\* Charlevoix Letter, Ed. VI. 333, Charlevoix III-30: Dillon's Hist. Ind., pp. 21-22.

† Shea's Charlevoix, Vol. V. p. 133.



rivers referred to also obtains as to the words, "St. Vincent" and "Vincennes," the first being the name of an individual and the second being only a title inherited from the Bissot family.

The fief of Vincennes was established in 1672. The Sieur de Vincennes, who died in 1719, was Jean Baptiste Bissot, the son of the first holder of the fief. \* \* \* Louisa Bissot (daughter) married Seraphim Morgane de la Valtrie, and her son Francois Morgane (he dropped the e final in writing his name) was the founder of Post Vincennes. \* \* \* Sieur de Vincennes must not be confounded with the members of the St. Vincent family, of whom there were two or three in the French service in the Northwest.\*

Jean Baptiste Bissot, Sieur de Vincennes, died about the year 1717 and his nephew, Pierre (Francois) Morgan, son of Louisa Bissot, who obtained an ensign's commission in 1799, assumed the style of Sieur de Vincennes, and retained much of his uncle's influence in the West. He was sent to the present Indiana to control the Miamis. He erected a post known as Ouiatenon, and about 1735 another on the Wabash, which took his name—Vincennes.†

It will be observed that the date, 1717, in the foregoing differs by two years from all other writers as to the time of the death of Jean Baptiste Bissot, and differs as to the time Vincennes founded the post that took his name, making it 1735, when Vincennes' letters from this place, known to exist, are dated as early as March, 1733, and from the tenor of them he must have been at the post at least as

---

\* Dunn Hist. Ind., p. 49.

† Shea, "The Hoosier State," in the Catholic News, September 10, 1890.

early as 1732, as he speaks of the fort and buildings having lately been erected by himself.

Roy, in *Memories de la Societie Royal du C. Canada*, Section 1, 1892, p. 39, has this to say: "Jean Baptiste adopted the military service as a profession and illustrated the name Bissot de Vincennes. He was the founder of the Post Ouiatenon. In 1736 he died, burned by the Chicachas (Chickasaws). The name of the capital of Indiana, Vincennes, is borrowed from that officer."\*

This statement is in contradiction of almost all writers on the subject. Jean Baptiste Bissot died at the Miami's post in 1719, and was not burned at the stake in Louisiana, but his nephew, Francois Morgan, Sieur de Vincennes, did suffer so in 1736 in company with his commander, Diron de Artaguette, Father Senat and other prisoners captured in battle by the Chickasaw Indians.

Having discredited the claim that this site was occupied by Europeans in 1702 by the testimony of Law's History, page 15, where he said: "Records of the Catholic Church here make no mention of a missionary until the year 1749, when Father Meurin came here," and having the testimony of divers authorities that Sieur Juchereau erected his fort at the mouth of the Ohio river, instead of the Vincennes site, and that the Missionary Mermet's labors were at the mouth of the Ohio river, I will try to show the time when the Indian village Che-pe-ko-ke was first occupied by Europeans.

The Chronological History of the United States says: "1732—Vincennes founds Vincennes, the first European settlement in Indiana."† Taking this statement as the

---

\* Edmund Mallet, *Ind. H. Soc.*, p. 56.

† Robert James Belford, in the *N. Y. World's Chro. Hist. U. S.*, p. 60.

central point of consideration on the question of the time as to when Vincennes was first settled, the testimony leading to its establishment will be next presented.

In relation to the early history of alleged missions and forts established here, I quote from the *Western Annals*, a book published in 1851 at St. Louis. The author says: "Charlevoix, who records the death of Vincennes in 1736, makes no mention of any post on the Wabash, or any mission there; neither does he mark any upon his map, although he gives even the British fort upon the Tennessee and elsewhere."\* \* \* Vivier, in his letters of 1750, writing from "Aux Illinoix" and Fort Chartres, says nothing of any mission on the Wabash, although writing in respect to Western missions, and speaks of the necessity of a fort upon the Ouabache. How natural to refer to the post at Vincennes if one existed. In a volume of *Memoirs on Louisiana*, compiled from the minutes of M. Dumont, and published in Paris in 1753, but probably prepared in 1749, though we have an account of the Wabash, or St. Jerome, as it was called, its rise and course and the use made of it by the traders, not a word is found touching any fort, settlement or station on it.† Vandriel, when Governor of Louisiana, in 1751, mentioned even then no post on the Wabash, although he speaks of a need of a post on the Ohio near to where Fort Massac was built afterwards, and names Fort Miami on the Maumee.

Mr. Justin Windsor, Librarian of Harvard University, one of the late investigators of the settlement of the Wabash, says: "The Mississippi Company (a company of

---

\* A French Jesuit priest, historian and missionary to Canada, who explored the western country and the Mississippi river to its mouth. He arrived in America at St. Joseph, Mich., a trading post, August 8, 1721.

† *Mémoires Historique Sur Louisiana*, etc., 1753-Paris.



traders in pelfry) had urged, September 15, 1720, the building of a fort on the Wabash as a safeguard against the English, and the need of it had attracted the attention of Charlevoix. Some such precaution, indeed, was quite necessary to overcome the savages, for now the Wabash-Maumee portage was coming into favor, the Indians had been prowling about it and murdering the passers.

"In 1724 La Harpe feared the danger of delay. In 1725 the necessity for some such protection alarmed Boisbriant early in the year. \* \* \* As a result, we find the Company of the Indies, December, 1725, instructing Boisbriant to beware of the English, and to let M. de Vincennes, then among the Miamis (who were then included in the Canadian provinces, and their principal settlement was at Green Bay, Wis.), know that the rivals were coming in that direction. The next year the company informed Perier (September 30, 1726) of their determination to be prepared, and authorized him to concert with Vincennes to repel the English if they approached."\*

Smith says: "There is no correct record of when the post of Vincennes was established, but it was probably in 1727. In that year Vincennes and his faithful lieutenant, St. Ange, were at Kaskaskia. \* \* \*"<sup>†</sup>

The journal of La Harpe, giving full particulars of the occurrences in Illinois and Ouiatenon countries from 1698 to 1722, makes no mention of any post at Vincennes."

General Harmar, who visited the post in 1787, in a letter to the Secretary of War, says: "I have been informed by the inhabitants that Vincennes had established a post sixty years before. That would place it at 1727. \* \* \*

---

\* The Miss. Basin, p. 148.

† W. H. Smith's Hist. Ind., p. 18.

In the summer of 1726 the directors learned that their post was not yet established. \* \* \* Efforts had been made frequently by this trading company to have a post established at this point and had held out pecuniary inducement to that end, but had so far failed.\*

“On the Wabash, near the present site of Vincennes, was an important Indian village, known as Chip-kaw-kay, and it is probable that when the French settlers arrived they heard stories of prior visits made by traders, and after a lapse of time those traditions became transposed into facts relating to the first actual settlement. To hold their claim upon the Mississippi valley the French, in 1702, determined to establish some posts along the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, and M. Juchereau did erect a fort at the mouth of the Ohio.”

This same author says, on page 18 of his said work: “One of the best evidences that it (a post) was not established in an earlier year, to which the date (1727) has been assigned, lies in the fact that all persons concede that it was established by Francois Morgan, Sieur de Vincennes. He did not succeed to the title until late in the year 1719. He was a son of the sister of the elder Sieur de Vincennes, and succeeded to the title on the death of his uncle, which took place at \* \* \* the Indian village on the Maumee. It is very possible that French traders had visited the Indian village of Chip-kaw-kay many years previously, but the fact is apparent that no settlement was made or post established before 1727. Some eight years later a number of French families settled there, and it became the first actual settlement in the State. It was called,

---

\* Dunn Hist. Ind., p. 53.

in the first record, 'The Post,' 'Old Post,' 'Au Poste,' and remained the only settlement of whites in the State until after the Revolutionary war, although a military fort was maintained both at the head of the Maumee and at Ouate-non by the French until the country was ceded to Great Britain."\*

In a Memoir of M. de St. Denis, Commandant, dated Natchitoches, November 30, 1731, he says: "On the Ouabache, which has always been neglected, on which, in my opinion, by the information I have had, we should be the first to form an establishment, for, by report, it is a key to the English, by which they would be better able to get hold of the Province of Louisiana than any other place and to entice away some of our tribes. I would advance the number needed there, so to speak, to four hundred men rather than three."†

This statement shows that up to this date there was no "Post" then established at this point on the Ouabache, that is, up to November 30, 1731, and if no post, no mission, as they could not exist without protection.

In Law's History, touching this officer's movements: "Vincennes," he says, "was in the service of the Governor of Canada as late as 1725. At what time he took possession here is not exactly known; probably somewhere about 1732."‡ He alludes to a sale recorded at Kaskaskia, January 5, 1735, and says the document styles him "an officer of the troops of the King," and "*Commandant au poste du Ouabache*," and he says further, the will of Monsieur Philip Longprie, his father-in-law, dated March

---

\* Smith's Hist. Ind., p. 12.

† Ind. Hist. Society, p. 296.

‡ Law's Hist. Ind., p. 19.



10, 1735, gives him, among other things, eight hundred and eight pounds of pork, which he wishes kept safe until the arrival of Monsieur Vincennes, who was then at the post. There are other documents there signed by him as a witness in 1733-4, among them one receipt for one hundred pistoles, received from his father-in-law on his marriage. From all these proofs I think it evident that he was here previous to 1733.

The late Orlan F. Baker, in his article on the "History of Knox County," says, in reference to the French commander, Francois Morgan de Vincennes: "For gallant conduct at this siege (Detroit) De Vincennes was restored to a rank forfeited by a previous disobedience of orders in Europe and promoted to a command for the King in Illinois, and sent by M. de Vandrial, Governor of Canada, to Sault Ste. Marie, at which place and Machilamackinac he remained until 1732, when under the orders of Longenville, for the King, he repaired to the command of the 'Post des Ouabache.'

"The Ouiatenon settlement was now broken up, and the inhabitants removed to the poste."\*

The foregoing corroborates the inference of Law as to the advent of Vincennes to this place, and doubtless from the period of his arrival, 1732, may be taken as the time of the beginning of the settlement or founding of Vincennes.

To settle the question, inference lends its aid while considering collateral subjects.

Count Volney, who visited America and was in Vincennes in 1796, says: "From the best information I

---

\* Hist. Knox County, p. 26.

could obtain from the inhabitants, I judged the first settlement was not much earlier than 1757, but giving the benefit to the traditions of some of the oldest inhabitants, the time might be as early as 1735.”\*

That a Jesuit missionary may have been here a few years preceding the advent of Morgan de Vincennes is not unlikely, for in December, 1726, there departed nine Jesuit priests from France for New Orleans, where there were others, making in all twenty-one, to be distributed, by the order of the Bishop of Quebec, in the Province of Louisiana. In this distribution we find that the Jesuit Father, Pierre D’Outreleau, was assigned to the Ouabache, 1728, and this is the first mention of a priest being sent to the Ouabache (except that of Pierre Mermet, who was with Sieur Juchereau, who was in fact not here, but at the mouth of the Ohio, then called Ouabache, near the site of Cairo, among the Mascouten Indians). The Father’s place of residence is not definitely known. It might have been among the Indians on the Upper Wabash, at Kaskaskia or at the mouth of the Ohio, until his appearance again at New Orleans, to which place he had started and came near losing his life on the way by the Indians in 1730.†

The first advent of an itinerant missionary or erratic traders could not in a correct sense be called a settlement, even if the Father and some traders had been here previous to 1732, and it has been shown no post had been established here prior to that date. Then it becomes necessary to indicate a period to which a settlement might be reasonably ascribed.

---

\* Law’s Hist. of Vincennes, p. 12; History Knox County, 236.

† Dunn Ind. Hist. Society, p. 274; from Sister Madeline Hachard’s Journal, New Orleans.

The arrival of F. Morgan de Vincennes and the transference of the colonists from Ouiatenon (near Lafayette) to the Che-pe-ko-ke village in 1732, may be taken as the time of the beginning of the settlement of this "post," and the subsequent marriage of Commander Vincennes to a French lady, daughter of Philip Longprie, at Kaskaskia, in 1733, but emphasized and gave impetus to the settlement when he brought his bride to the new nucleus of civilization, Post Ouabache. That the French people of the Indian village so understood that time as the beginning of the Caucasian settlement, finds corroboration in a report made to the civil officers of the United States Government in 1790. When Winfield Sargent, Secretary for the Territories northwest of the Ohio river, was sent here to organize a county (which he called Knox) he found much of the land adjacent was claimed by the villagers, and so reported to the Washington Government, whereupon he was requested by the same to ascertain of them upon what authority they based their rights. A committee of the leading settlers answered, in part, as follows in their report: "We beg leave to inform you that their principal reason is, that since the establishment of the country the Commandants have always appeared to be vested with the power to give lands; their founder, M. Vincennes, began to give concessions, and all his successors have given lots and lands." Signed, "F. Busseron, L. E. Delisle, Pierre Gamelon, Pierre Querez, July 3, 1790."\* In this report it is seen that the French villagers claimed that F. Morgan de Vincennes was the founder of this settlement or post. This declaration indicates the commencement of the French settlement of Vincennes, according to

---

\* Letter to Winthrop Sargent; Hist. Knox County, p. 124.



the views of the people themselves ; and, hence, the conclusions, from all the evidence adduced, that the settlement of Vincennes cannot be rightfully placed at an earlier date than 1732.

Since the foregoing was written the President of the Vincennes University received photographic copies of two letters from the Honorable Jacob P. Dunn, Secretary of the Indiana Historical Society, written by the founder of Vincennes, dated respectively March 7 and 21, 1733, and procured for that society from the French archives by Consul-General J. K. Gowdy, at Paris. These letters are timely, as there is an awakening of Indianians about their colonial history, and they add to our scant stock of reliable knowledge on the subject. While these letters do not furnish the exact date of the settlement of Vincennes, they come so close to it that they aid us in forming reasonable conclusions about it. The information gained through the letter of March 7\* settles the question of when the first fort was built and by whom it was done, and is as follows:

“March 7, 1733—Monsieur: To make reply to the honor of yours, I will commence by informing you that the Ouabache nation is composed of five tribes, which includes four villages, of which the least is of sixty men bearing arms, and in all about 600 or 700 men, whom it will be necessary for the good of the service to gather together and remove from proximity to the English. It has been impossible for me to bring together all these tribes because I have always lacked merchandise in this place. The fort which I have had built is 400 leagues up the Ouabache, above the rivers by which the English will

---

\* Addressed probably to the Governor at Detroit, as no address heads the letter. Ind. Historic Transactions, p. 304.



be able to descend and open trade with these tribes. The place is well fitted for the location of a large establishment, which I would have made if I had had the troops. In regard to the trade which can be had, it is in furs. It is possible to send out from this post every year about 30,000 skins. That, monsieur, is all the trade that can be secured for the present.

“There has never been so great need of troops at this place as at present. The Indians, Illinois as well as Miamis and others, are more insolent than they have ever been, and that since the Foxes have been overthrown. The little experience I have acquired in the twenty years I have been with them makes me fear some bad return from these nations, especially mine, which sees an establishment that I have begun and which there has appeared no desire to continue in the past three years. The only thing that can come in the meantime, monsieur, is the loss to us of all the tribes, both of the lakes and of other places.

“You have done me the honor to ask me to send you a statement of the works finished and to be constructed. There is only a fort and two houses in it, and there should at once be built a guard-room with barracks for lodging the soldiers. It is not possible to remain in this place with so few troops. I will need thirty men with an officer. I am more embarrassed than ever in this place by the war with the Chickasaws, who have come here twice since spring. It is only twelve days since the last party brought in three persons, and as it is the French who have put the tomahawk in their hands, I am obliged to be at expense continually. I hope of your kindness that you will give special attention to this place and to the trouble which I

experience, as well for myself as for the little garrison that I have. It is a favor expected of you by him who has the honor to be with profound respect, monsieur, your very humble and obedient servant,

“VINCENNES,

“Of the Fort of the Ouabache, this 21st day of March, 1733.”

M. de Vincennes speaks of “the fort I have built,” etc. Again he says: “Monsieur, you asked me to send you a statement of the amount of the work finished and to be constructed. There is only a fort and two houses in it, and there should at once be built a guard-room, with a barracks for lodging the soldiers. It is not possible to remain in this place with so few troops. I will need thirty men with an officer.” This statement indicates that he had been at this point not exceeding a year, and that he felt insecure, although he had a fort; then how could it be reasonably supposed that a mission had existed there previously, as the work commenced had not been completed? In the letter he alludes to the time of his service against the Indians, which serves, indirectly, to fix the time of his advent in Che-pe-ko-ke village. He says: “The little experience I have acquired in the *twenty years* I have been with them, makes me fear some bad returns from these natives,” etc. He speaks of his small force, and says: “The Chickasaws are menacing me, having been to the post twice since spring.” All of which goes to show that he had not fully established himself and felt insecure in March, 1733, and had been there only a short time. It is stated that in May, 1712, at the instigation of the English interests in New York, a desperate attempt was

made to destroy the fort near Detroit. Two villages of the Mascoutens and Ongatagniers had been established and fortified within a pistol shot of the French garrison. The Indians had determined to annihilate the posts and called to aid two large bands to help them. On the 13th of May, 1712, Francois Morgan de Vincennes arrived with seven or eight Frenchmen. That night a Huron came into the fort and announced that the Potawattomie war chief desired to counsel with the French, and would meet them at the old Huron fort. Vincennes went over and was told that six hundred men from the villages upon the St. Jerome (Wabash) would soon arrive and help the garrison. Upon Vincennes' return Duboisson, the Commander, at once closed the fort and prepared for a siege. The next day Duboisson ascended a bastion and casting his eye toward the woods, saw the army of the natives of the south issuing from it. They were the Illinois, Missouri, Osages and other natives yet more remote. The battle began at once, etc., resulting in a victory for the French and their allies.\* This quotation is introduced to show the time M. de Vincennes arrived in Detroit. Now, bear in mind the statement, in his letter of March 7, 1733, when he speaks of his dealing with the Indians twenty years; and, adding that number of years to the year of his arrival in Detroit, 1712, and we have the year 1732 as the time of his advent here.

The French King decided to establish two posts in 1731—one at Illinois and one “at the Onabache,” “to commence July 1, 1731.”† Let it be remembered that Commander M. de St. Denis, Commandant at Natchitoches,

---

\* Duboisson's Diary, p. 2.

† Ind. Hist. Society Publications, p. 297 (1902).



as late as November 30, 1731, deplored the fact that no establishment had been erected up to that time on the Ouabache, and the only evidence to show that a post was commenced that year is the half-yearly allowance made to the officers from July 1 of that year (1731). From the time the edict was issued to the time the same would reach M. de Vincennes, would be probably six months, and then the year 1732 would have been ushered in, but the officers would rightfully draw half-pay for that year, which they did. The allowance for salaries for one-half a year is not positive evidence that Vincennes arrived here in 1731. The presumption is that his orders did not arrive before January 1, 1732. In 1732 the first full year's salary was allowed. Taking into consideration the fact of the little work done on the fort and buildings up to March, 1733, as given in the late published letters of Vincennes in connection with the one given by St. Denis (that no fort had been established in 1731), just stated, the legitimate conclusion to be drawn from them is that the year 1732 is the earliest date of the founding of Vincennes.

The foregoing facts and arguments set forth about the first European settlement in Indiana ought to be considered sufficient proof as to the period Vincennes was first settled. The French government occupied the country until Canada and the Northwest Territory were ceded to Great Britain at the conclusion of their war, 1763, when it became a bone of contention between the latter government and the federal colonies of North America. It proved to be a point rich in splendid results, and a prize worthy of the most astute diplomacy and consummate strategy and prowess in warfare, and the contention for it



culminated, finally, on February 25, 1779, when it passed under the control of the State of Virginia, through the agency of Colonel George Rogers Clark, whose skill and daring had not been surpassed by any military officer in American history. The subject is full of interesting incidents, but to enter upon a more elaborate history would require the presentation of more facts and statistics than would be profitable or interesting to the casual inquirer.

Francois Morgan de Vincennes, military commander, having taken possession of Che-pe-ko-ke late in 1731, or early in 1732, a stockade and two houses were built for defenses against the attack of the Indians, and as a protection to the traders. He remained in command here until 1736, when he was ordered by the French Governor of Detroit to join M. D'Artegette in his campaign against the Chickasaw Nation with a force to be sent from New Orleans; but owing to mishaps, the forces did not form a junction, according to instructions, and the commander made the attack with his own troops and was defeated, captured and burned. For his heroism in the battle he, it was said, was sainted by his church, and the post christened "Post St. Vincennes," and was so called until the simple name of Vincennes was adopted. About the year 1749, the fort's name became that of Fort St. Ange, in honor of the successor of Vincennes in command of the post, he having, it is said, improved the church and placed on it a belfry and bell.

## Chapter II.

### CLARK'S CAMPAIGN.

**C**OLONEL GEORGE ROGERS CLARK, having been sent out by Governor Patrick Henry, of Virginia, with a small army of Virginia and Kentucky volunteers, to capture the outposts of Great Britain in this part of the Northwest Territory, and having succeeded in capturing Kaskaskia, on the Kaskaskia river, her greatest stronghold in 1778, mostly by boldness and strategy, he conceived the idea of making a dash for the seizure of Vincennes, having learned of its weak condition and the friendliness of the citizens of the village through a resident priest of Kaskaskia. To this end he sent there Father Pierre Gibault, the priest, an intelligent gentleman, whom he had found to be friendly to America, to ascertain the obstacles to be overcome in the accomplishment of the scheme. The priest assured him that although secular matters did not pertain to his calling, yet if the Colonel would commit the whole matter to him, there need be no further uneasiness, for he might give them such spiritual advice as would do the business. Accordingly, on July 14, 1778, Father Gibault, with Dr. LaFonte, Civil Magistrate: Captain Leonard Helm, representing the military, and Moses Henry, Interpreter and Envoy, were sent to Vincennes, and the peaceful reduction of the fort was undertaken. Fort Sackville was then garrisoned by the militia under St. Maria Racine. Governor Abbott had gone to

Detroit the month before to assure the military officer there that the rumored demonstrations from the Ohio border must prove futile.

The commissioners of Clark, having arrived at the village, and communicated with the traders and citizens, a meeting was called at the church, the time seeming propitious for a *coup d'état*, and on the 6th of August Francis Busseron, the Mayor, to whom the priest had imparted an account of what had occurred in Illinois, and the purpose of the visit to Vincennes, arose in the church, at the close of the services, and in the presence of the detained audience, interrogated the holy Father so skillfully concerning the power of the arms of Virginia and the justice of the cause of the colonies against England that all the assembly were at once inclined to make friends with the new power. "Then," said Busseron, "why delay? Let us show him that we are his friends, and if Virginia will receive us, let us become her subjects."\* LaFonte said that he was authorized to accept their allegiance and to pledge them the whole power of the Confederate Colonies to protect them. Without a word more, a roll of citizenship was displayed and each adult, attaching his name in America's Doom's Day Book, \* \* \* repeated after the priest a vow of fidelity to republican institutions. \* \* \* The assembly with great joy, after electing Captain Helm to command, with drum and instruments of music, marched to the fort and received from the wily commander the master keys. In a few hours after the glittering stars and blazing stripes climbed the bastion of Sackville and floated out in the summer air to the astonishment of the

---

\* Busseron was commissioned Captain by Clark, August 16, 1778.



Indians, who were told their Old Father, the French King, had come to life again.\*

Judge Lasselle, a citizen of Logansport, Indiana, has in his possession Captain Busseron's account book, which furnishes hitherto unpublished matter in relation to accounts against Captain Leonard Helm. Captain Busseron was authorized by him to organize a military company. So we find a part of the record runs:

“November 4, 1778—For having raised the company,  
500 (presumably francs).

“November 12, 1778—Paid to St. Maria for 5 ells of  
red serge for the flag, 5.

Paid to Mr. Dagenet for  $3\frac{1}{2}$  ells  
of green serge at 10-37-10.

Paid Madam Godare for mak-  
ing flag, 25.”

Judge Lasselle adds: “From these entries we can obtain almost a full and precise description of the flag. It consisted of two stripes, one of red and the other of green; the extra link of the red stripe of one and three-fourths ells. The French ell being forty inches in length, and taken off to form the shield in its proper place, left the flag about eleven feet in length. \* \* \* It was a famous flag for reason that it was the first American flag in all that vast extent of territory of the present United States, extending westward from the Blue Ridge mountains in Virginia to the Pacific ocean.”

This is the flag around which Maurice Thompson has woven the thrilling incidents pictured in his popular romance.

---

\* Hist. Knox County, p. 4.



Thus, it will be observed, without the firing of a gun, through strategy, Fort Sackville was delivered by its militia officer, St. Maria Racine, into the hands of Captain Leonard Helm, and the interpreter, Henry. The Indians, who were the friends of the English, immediately sent runners to Detroit to inform the British commander there of the result at Post Vincennes, and preparations were commenced to retake the fort and village; to this end Langlade was dispatched to assemble the Indians near the village, while Lieutenant-Governor Hamilton prepared a fleet to take through the lakes to the head of the Wabash river; and early in October he and Major Hay, with eighty-four soldiers and one hundred Indians, started to recapture Vincennes and destroy Clark's forces at Kaskaskia. Captain Helm, fearing that he could not be reinforced at an early day and suspicioning that a Detroit force might be sent against him, sent out a spy to keep him advised of any approaching danger, but his messenger was captured and killed and all his papers seized; thus the flotilla of Hamilton and his army from Detroit arrived within three miles of the village before it was discovered. Captain Helm and his interpreter, Henry, were the sole occupants of the fort when its surrender was demanded by Lieutenant-Governor Hamilton, the native militia failing to support Captain Helm. He stood by one of the cannons, it is said, with torch in hand, ready to fire it, and thus answered Hamilton: "By Heavens, no man enters here until I know the terms."

**1135560**

"You shall have the honors of war," responded Hamilton, and then, as the British army, at parade rest, saluted the lowering of the flag, the officer with his command of

one man, with military precision, marched out of the fortifications.\* Thus again, Fort Sackville, without bloodshed, passed under the sway of Great Britain, but not long to remain so. The re-establishment of the English with increased forces and Indian allies all around the post, Clark's situation at Kaskaskia became critical, if not really untenable, and Hamilton conceived the idea of capturing him by surprise. He sent out scouts for that purpose, but the winter was so inclement and traveling so bad, they failed to get to Kaskaskia. In the meantime Clark was concocting a scheme to surprise and take Hamilton and his forces. Although the time of enlistment of many of his soldiers had expired, and their places were to be filled with the new citizens from conquest, he determined to send an envoy to Vincennes to learn the temper of the people there, the probable number of Hamilton's force, the strength of the defenses to be overcome, and then take his chances for victory. After retaking the fort at Post Vincennes, it is somewhat remarkable that Hamilton did not follow up his success by pushing on to Kaskaskia and engaging his opponent, whose strength had been weakened by the expiration of the enlistments of the bulk of his soldiers, and before his little army could be recruited and reorganized and reinforcements could arrive, promised by the Governor of Virginia.

The presumption is that the British commander felt so secure in his quarters during the very severe winter, then at its worst, and so sure that no successful campaign could be waged against him by Clark's little army at that time of flood and ice, he could afford to wait until spring before

---

\* Hist. Knox County, p. 43.

entering upon his campaign against Kaskaskia. The result then, in his estimation, being an inevitable success, as he could be reinforced by that time with several hundred Indian warriors. As pride and over-confidence often go before their fall, this fateful and imagined security proved disastrous to him and his army ere the flowers began to bloom and the birds began to sing to cheer his army on in their anticipated triumphant spring campaign.

Colonel Clark's indomitable will, forceful mind and resourceful ingenuity to meet emergencies was put to the severest test in devising ways and means to thwart the schemes of his more powerful adversary and gain success himself. Great commanders are not made, but born so. What would have appeared insurmountable obstacles to some men, to him were not beyond attainment. So with firm resolve, stout heart and optimistic mind, he commenced evolving a scheme, the beginning of which would be to learn, authoritatively, from Vincennes what he would have to encounter to have his efforts crowned with victory. In order to accomplish this, he says, in a letter to his friend, Mr. George Mason: "I sent off a horseman to St. Vincent to take a prisoner, if possible, by which we might get information, but found it impossible on account of high water; but, in the height of our anxiety, on the evening of the 29th of January (1779) Mr. Francis Vigo, a Spanish merchant, arrived from St. Vincent, who was there at the time it was taken by Hamilton, and he gave me every intelligence I wished." The name of this good friend of the American cause should ever be held in grateful remembrance for his patriotism and generous deeds in advancing to Colonel Clark funds and helping to keep the



colonial scrip at par. He was rich and spent his fortune to advance and maintain American credit and supremacy. The name of Colonel Francis Vigo is well worthy to be embalmed in the memory of the citizens of Vincennes with the heroes, General George Rogers Clark and M. Pierre Gibault.

He said: "The Governor's party consisted of about 800 men when he took possession of the post, on the 17th of December last. Finding the season too far spent for his intention against Kaskaskia, he had sent nearly the whole of the Indians out to different parts to war, but to embody as soon as the weather would permit, and he could complete the design."\* Having the information he desired, Colonel Clark quickly proceeded to organize as large a force as possible, drawing from several adjacent recruiting stations. His plan was to send a portion of his force by boat, with provisions and war equipments and artillery taken from the fortifications at Kaskaskia, down the Mississippi river to the Ohio, and thence up the Ohio to the Wabash, up the latter river to within nine miles of Post St. Vincent, where a junction was to be made with the land forces under his command, as he would go directly across the country to that point. On the 3rd of February, 1779, Colonel Clark wrote to the Governor of Virginia, explaining his situation and lack of reinforcements promised, being sensible of his peril without them, which, at that time, he hardly had a right to expect, and added: "I shall be obliged to give the country to Hamilton without a turn of fortune in my favor. I am resolved to take advantage of his present situation and risk the whole on

---

\* Colonel Vigo's report to Colonel Clark.



a single battle. I shall set out in a few days with all the force I can raise of my own troops, and the few militia that I can depend upon, amounting to only one hundred and seventy men, some of which go on board the small galley. \* \* \* I shall march across the land myself with the rest of the boys. The principal persons that follow me on this forlorn hope are Captain Joseph Bowman, John Williams, Edward Worthington, Richard McCarty and Francis Charleville, Lieutenant Brashear, Abraham Keller, Abraham Chaplin, John Bailey and several other brave subalterns. \* \* \* I know the cause is desperate, but, sir, we must either quit the country or attack Hamilton. No time is to be lost. Were I sure of reinforcements, I would not attempt it now. Who knows what fortune will do for us? Great things have been effected by a few men well conducted. Perhaps we may be fortunate. We have this consolation, that our cause is just, and that our country will be grateful and not condemn our conduct in case we fall through; if so, this country, as well as Kentucky, I believe, is lost.”\*

Hoping almost without the least foundation for a hope to rest upon, knowing that Hamilton's force exceeded his by four to one, and that the enemy would be behind defenses well equipped, Colonel Clark, with his little, but heroic band, set out for Post St. Vincent, February 5, 1779, saying he would “conquer or die.” In his letter to a friend and patron, George Mason, of Virginia, he wrote: “I had a large boat prepared and rigged, mounting ten four-pounders and four large swivels, manned with a fine company of forty-five men, commanded by Lieutenant

---

\* Colonel Clark's letter to the Governor of Virginia.

Rogers. She set out the evening of the 4th of February, with orders to force her way, if possible, within ten miles of Post St. Vincent and lay until further orders. \* \* \* I got everything complete and on the 5th, at 3 o'clock p. m., marched, being joined by the volunteer companies of the principal young men of Illinois, commanded by Captain Charleville and Captain McCarty. Those of the troop were Captain Joseph Bowman and Edward Worthington, of the Light Horse."

The little army's travels and doings, from Kaskaskia to the near approach to Vincennes, will be given from Captain Bowman's diary, as they were clearly recorded in his journal, in preference to that taken from the letters of Colonel Clark in his memoirs, because the latter were written several years after these events occurred, when his recollection might have been faulty. He says: "Having crossed the Kaskaskia river on the 5th of February, 1779, the first day's journey was about three miles through mud and water." For some days following they found the conditions to be of a similar character and made slow progress.

\*"On February 10th crossed the River Petit Fork upon trees that were felled for that purpose, the water being so high there was no fording it. Still raining and no tents.

"On the 11th, crossed Saline river.

"12th of March crossed Cat Plains and killed numbers of buffalo; the road very bad and immense quantities of rain had fallen. The men much fatigued; camped on the edge of the wood. The plain is meadow, being fifteen or more miles across. It was late in the night before the

---

\* Colonel Clark's letter to the Governor of Virginia.

baggage and troops got together. Now within twenty-one miles of St. Vincent.

“13th—Arrived at the two Wabashes. Although a league asunder, they now made but one. We set to making a canoe.

“14th—Finished the canoe, and put her into the river about 4 o'clock in the afternoon.

“15th—Ferried across the two Wabashes, it being then five miles in water to the opposite hill, where we camped. Still raining. Orders not to fire any guns for the future, except in cases of necessity.

“16th—Marched all day through rain and water. Crossed Fox river. Our provisions began to be short.

“17th—Marched early, crossed several rivers very deep. Sent Mr. Kennedy, our commissary, with three men to cross the River Embarrass, if possible, and proceed to a plantation opposite Post Vincent in order to steal boats or canoes to ferry us across the Wabash. About an hour by sun we got near the River Embarrass. Found the country overflowed with water. We strove to find the Wabash. Traveled until 8 o'clock in mud and water, but could find no place to camp on. Still kept raining on, but after some time Mr. Kennedy and his party returned. Found it impossible to cross the Embarrass river. We found the water falling from a small spot of ground; stayed there the remainder of the night. Drizzling and dark weather.

“18th—At break of day heard Governor Hamilton's morning gun. Set off and marched down the river.

\* \* \* About 2 o'clock came to the bank of the Wabash; made rafts for four men to cross and go up to town and steal boats, but they spent the day and night in the



water to no purpose, for there was not one foot of dry land to be found.

“19th—Captain McCarty’s company set to making a canoe, and at 3 o’clock four men returned after spending the night on some old logs in the water. The canoe finished, Captain McCarty, with three of his men, embarked in the canoe and made the third attempt to steal boats, but soon returned, having discovered four large fires about a league distant from the camp, which seemed to him to be the fires of whites and Indians. Colonel Clark sent two men in the canoe down to meet the bateau, with orders to come on day and night, that being the last hope, and we starving. Many of the men much cast down, particularly the volunteers. No provisions of any sort now two days. Hard fortune.

“20th—Camp very quiet, but hungry; some almost in despair. Many of the Creole volunteers talking of returning. Fell to making more canoes, when about 12 o’clock our sentries on the river brought to a boat with five Frenchmen from the Post, who told us that we were not as yet discovered; that the inhabitants were well disposed towards us, etc. Said Captain Willing’s brother, who was taken in the fort, had made his escape, and that one Masonville, with a party of Indians, was then seven days out in pursuit of him, with much more news to our favor, such as repairs done on fort, the strength, etc. They informed us of two canoes they had seen adrift some distance above us. Ordered that Captain Worthington with a party go in search of them. Returned late with one only. One of our men killed a deer, which was brought into camp.

“21st—At break of day began to ferry our men over in canoes to a small hill, called ‘Mammelle’ (a prominence, a



knoll or small hill rising above the water, called so by the French, which is likened unto the mamma or breast rising above the surface of the chest. This is nearly opposite the town of St. Francisville, Illinois.) Captain Williams, with two men, went to look for a passage and were discovered by two men in a canoe, but could not fetch them to. The whole army being over, we thought to get to town that night, so we plunged into the water, sometimes to the neck, for more than one league, when we stopped on the next hill (at or near St. Rose Catholic Church grounds) of the same name (Mammelle), there being no dry land on any side for many leagues. Our pilots say we can not get along—that it is impossible. Rain all this day. No provisions.

“22d—Colonel Clark encourages his men, which gave them great spirits. Marched on in the water. Those that were very weak and famished from so much fatigue and hunger went in the canoes. We came one league further to some Sugar camps (situated about four miles below town, to the right, going south of Cathlionette road), where we stayed all night. Heard the evening and morning guns of the fort. No provisions yet. Lord, help us.

“23d—Set off to cross the plain, called Horseshoe Plain, about four miles long and covered with water breast high. Here we expected some of our brave men must certainly perish, having frozen in the night, and so long fasting. Having no other recourse but wading over this plain, or rather lake of water, we plunged into it with courage, Colonel Clark, being the first, taking care to have the boat try to take those that were weak and numb with cold into them. Never were men so animated with the thought of

avenging the wrongs done to their back settlements as this small army. About 1 o'clock we came in sight of the town. We halted on a small hill of dry land (two miles south of town, to the right of same road from town) called 'Warriors' Island,' where we took a prisoner hunting ducks, who informed us that no person suspected our coming at that season of the year."

Having followed Captain Bowman's account of the march of Colonel Clark's army to Warriors' Island, the writer will give the record of Colonel Clark himself from that on of the succeeding journey to the town. He says: "To our inexpressible joy we got safe on *terra firma* within half a league of the fort, covered by a small grove of trees, and had a full view of the wished-for spot.  
\* \* \* We had already taken some prisoners that were coming from the town. Lying in this grove some time to dry our clothes by the sun, we took another prisoner, known to be a friend, from whom we got all the intel-

NOTE.—Warriors' Island, alluded to by Captain Bowman in his foregoing journal of the route traveled, is a piece of high ground situated a quarter of a mile southwest of the residence of Mr. — Cline, on the Cathlionette road. Mr. John R. Glass, now an elderly citizen, informs me that he lived on this farm land, from early childhood, with his grandfather, Mr. Deleria, until he was thirteen years old, and said: "The current opinion in early days was that the hill received its name from the fact that it was once occupied by some Indian warriors." It is really not an island, as the reader might infer, but high ground on the lower prairie, which appeared only as an island during an overflow of the river. The nature of the route traveled to the village excludes "Bunker Hill," in the line of march, as some have asserted. The army could not have reached this hill, had it so desired, on account of the large deep pond and miry, swampy slough, that laid between them. During the driest time of the year such a feat would have been difficult to accomplish by starving and exhausted troops. Besides, the route by the way of the hill would have been longer and out of the direct line of march, and, if it could have been gained, another ravine and slough would have intervened between them and the next hill, which would have been difficult to reach on account of the high stage of waters then existing. The army took the only practicable route, although it was covered with water that was in many places, the narrator says, "waist high."

ligence wished for; but would not suffer him to see our troops, except a few. \* \* \* I resolved to appear as daring as possible, that the enemy might conceive, by our behavior, that we were very numerous, and probably discourage them. I immediately wrote to the inhabitants in general, informing them where I was, and what I determined to do, desiring the friends to the States to keep close to their houses, and those in the British interest to repair to the fort and fight for their King; otherwise there would be no mercy shown them, etc. Sending the compliments of several officers that were known to be expected to reinforce me, to several gentlemen of the town, I dispatched the person off with this letter, waiting until nearly sunset, giving him time to get near the town before we marched. As it was an open plain from the wood that covered us, I marched in time to be seen from the town before dark, but taking advantage of the land, disposed the lines in such a manner that nothing but the pavillions (flags that the ladies of Kaskaskia had given him) could be seen, having as many of them as would be sufficient for one thousand men; which was observed by the inhabitants, who had just received my letter, and who counted the different colors, and judged our numbers accordingly. But I was careful to give them no opportunity of seeing our troops before dark, which it would be before we could arrive at the village. The houses obstructed the fort's observing us, and no alarm was evinced, as I expected, by the inhabitants. In order to give them time to publish the letter we laid still till sundown, when we began our march, all in order, with colors flying, and drums braced. After wading to the edge



of the water, breast high, we mounted the rising ground the town is built on. (This ground is now occupied by the Catholic cemetery and O'Donnell's field.)

"About 8 o'clock Lieutenant Bailey, with about fourteen men, were dispatched to fire on the fort while we took possession of the town, and ordered to stay until he was relieved by another party, which was done.

"We were informed that Captain Lamont, with a party of twenty-five men, were out on a scout, who, hearing our firing, came back." Early in the night the Indian chief, Tobacco, friendly to the Americans, approached Colonel Clark and told him he could muster twenty-five braves, and requested that he might lead them, saying that "they would climb the fort." Clark thanked him and said: "Tell them to go to their houses; they might be mistaken for foes." He acquiesced, says a narrator, in this decision, but stayed with Clark, at the latter's request, during the remainder of the night, well pleased, and gave him much valuable information.

"At the first fire the various troops took positions. Charleville took a position among the houses on the south side of the fort; Bowman and his company at the foot of Busseron street, on the river bank; while Lieutenant Bailey opened fire on the front and flank of the fortress." So complacent was Hamilton in the belief that Clark would not dare so rash an attempt as to attack the fort, and so well had the secret of his approach been kept, of an invading force by the citizens, that it was only after a British soldier had been shot down at a port hole he realized that the Americans confronted him in battle array.

"The firing continued all night, the cannon of the fort shattering houses, but almost useless against the riflemen,

protected by the houses and picket fences. The embrasures for the cannon had to be frequently shut, for the flash of the guns but invited the sure aim of fifty besiegers. Two American troopers were wounded in this night attack, while the English lost three killed and four wounded. Major Bowman commenced to entrench on Main street, preparatory for the use of the cannon, expected hourly by the bateau, with which he expected to blow up the fort's magazine." Early in the morning Captain Lamont's force, which had returned the night before, were hovering around the town, seeking to enter the fort. Clark sent a detachment to intercept and capture them, but finding it fruitless, withdrew his troops a little from the garrison, in order to give them a chance to get in, which they did, much to their credit and his satisfaction, believing if they did not get in at daybreak, they would go off and join other Indians. He says: "Several of the number, however, were captured, among them a famous Indian partisan of the name of Masonville." He was captured by two Indian boys, it is said, who tied and took him near the fort, and fought behind him as a breastwork, supposing that the British would not fire at them for fear of killing him. The news coming to Clark, he ordered them to take him to the guard house, which they did, but were so inhuman as to take a part of his scalp on the way. When the firing ceased, at daylight, the troops being nearly famished and exhausted from incessant labor and long fasting, Clark, in order to give time for rest and victualing the troops, sent a flag of truce with a letter of a bluffing kind to Lieutenant-Governor Hamilton. During this truce interval the ladies of the village busied themselves in giving the famished soldiers the first full meal they had had

for about five days. Colonel Clark's note to Lieutenant-Governor Hamilton reads: "Sir—In order to save yourselves from the impending storm that now threatens you, I order you to immediately surrender yourselves, with all your garrison, stores, etc. For, if I am obliged to storm you, you may depend on such treatment as is justly due to a murderer. Beware of destroying stores of any kind, or letters that are in your possession, or hurting one house in the town, for, by Heavens, if you do, there shall be no mercy shown you. (Signed) G. R. Clark." To which the British commander replied: "Lieutenant-Governor Hamilton begs leave to acquaint Colonel Clark that he and his garrison are not disposed to be awed into any action unworthy British subjects." Then the firing was renewed and continued at the end of the truce with more vigor than ever, and the men were in favor of storming the citadel. Hamilton, becoming depressed, sent that evening a flag of truce and a proposition to Colonel Clark, as follows: "Lieutenant-Governor Hamilton proposes to Colonel Clark a truce for three days, during which time he pledges that there shall be no defensive works carried on in the garrison, on condition that Colonel Clark shall observe, on his part, a like cessation of defensive works; that is, he wishes to confer with Colonel Clark, as soon as can be, and promises that whatever may pass between them two, and another person, mutually agreed upon, to be present, shall be secret till matters be finished; as he wishes that whatever results of the conference may be, it may tend to the honor and credit of each party. If Colonel Clark makes a difficulty of coming into the fort, Lieutenant-Governor Hamilton will speak to him by the gate. February 24, 1779. (Signed) Henry Hamilton."



Clark was sure that the delayed boat would arrive in three days, when he would be reinforced with men, ammunition, stores and artillery, and could well afford some delay on that account, yet he was so confident that he was master of the situation, he determined to press his advantage to the utmost, and accordingly returned the following answer:

“Colonel Clark’s compliments to Lieutenant-Governor Hamilton, and begs leave to inform him that he will not agree to any terms other than Mr. Hamilton surrenders himself and garrison, at discretion. If Mr. Hamilton is desirous of a conference with Colonel Clark, he will meet him at the church with Captain Helm. (Signed) G. R. Clark.”

This note had the effect to bring about a conference at the church. When they met Clark had little to say, as he considered Hamilton and his officers as murderers, and intended to treat them as such. The conference brought about no agreement, although Hamilton was disposed to surrender on conditions favorable to himself and followers. After stating the terms and Clark not agreeing, he asked: “What more do you want?” Clark replied: “I want sufficient cause to put all the Indians and partisans to death, as the greater part of these villains are with you.” All of Hamilton’s propositions being rejected, he asked Clark if nothing would do but fighting. To which Clark replied: “I know nothing else.” Clark then states that Hamilton begged him to stay until he should go to the garrison and consult with his officers.

The Kickapoo Indians, who were friendly to the Americans, about this time discovered a party of Indians, whom

Hamilton had sent out for scalps, coming over the hills back of the village, and gave the information to Clark, and a party was sent out to meet them on the commons. They conceived our troops to be a party sent by Hamilton to meet and conduct them in—an honor commonly paid them. “I was,” said Clark, “highly pleased to see each of the party whooping, hallooing and striking each others’ breasts, as they approached in open field, each seeming to outdo the other with the greatest signs of joy. The poor devils never discovered their mistake until too late for many of them to escape. Six of them were made prisoners, two escaped and the rest were so badly wounded, as we afterwards learned, that but one lived. I had now as fair an opportunity of making an impression on the Indians as I could have wished for—that of convincing them that Governor Hamilton could not give them that protection he had made them believe he could; and, in some measure, to incense the Indians against him for not exerting himself to save their friends; and I ordered the prisoners to be tomahawked in the face of the garrison. It had the effect I expected. Instead of making their friends inveterate against us, they upbraided the English for not trying to save their friends, and gave them to understand that they believed them liars and not warriors.” A thrilling incident, it is said, occurred at the execution of the captured warriors. The leader of them proved to be the son of a Frenchman named St. Croix, a member of Captain McCarty’s volunteer company from Cahokia, Illinois. He was painted like an Indian, and not even his father recognized him while standing guard over him with a drawn sword, to see that he did not escape. At the critical

moment, when the ax was about to fall, he cried out: "O, save me." The father recognized his voice, and you may easily guess at the agitation and behavior of the two persons. Clark, who had so little mercy for such murderers, and had such a valuable opportunity for example, knowing that there would be great solicitation to save him, says he immediately absconded; but so exceedingly well had the father performed his duties in the service, at his earnest request, the officer in charge granted a reprieve on certain conditions.

After this episode the chief officers met in council again, consisting of Lieutenant-Governor Hamilton and Major Hays, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, on the part of Great Britain, and Colonel George Rogers Clark and Captain Joseph Bowman, representing the Americans, and Captain Leonard Helm, mutually selected as a witness. Hamilton produced articles of capitulation, which were rejected by Clark, and they separated.

Towards the close of the evening Clark sent Hamilton the following articles:

"1st. That Lieutenant-Governor Hamilton engages to deliver to Colonel G. R. Clark, Fort Sackville, as it is at present, with all the stores, etc.

"2d. The garrison are to deliver themselves up as prisoners of war, and march out with their arms and accouterments.

"3d. The garrison to be delivered up to-morrow at 10 o'clock a. m.

"4th. Three days' time to be allowed the garrison to settle their accounts with traders and inhabitants.

"5th. The officers of the garrison to be allowed their necessary baggage, etc."



These terms were accepted by Hamilton, and he delivered up the fort at 10 o'clock a. m., February 25, 1779, and the stars and stripes, which had been hauled down when Captain Helm delivered up the fort to Hamilton, and so dear to that ideal patriotic heroine, "Alice of Old Vincennes," mounted up the flagstaff again to kiss the morning breezes, fanned by the wings of Liberty, as she hovered over and welcomed home and blessed Old Glory with benisons of love.

Colonel Clark immediately changed the name of the fort to that of Patrick Henry, in honor of the then Governor of Virginia, dating his official papers at Fort Patrick Henry.

Soon after capitulation was effected it was learned that an expedition was on its way from Detroit, and was expected shortly, in aid of Hamilton, by the way of the lakes and the Wabash, composed of soldiers, stores, munitions of war, etc. Captain Bowman, who had been promoted to the office of Major, was ordered by Colonel, now General, Clark, by promotion after the capture of the town, to intercept it. Accordingly, on the evening of the 26th, with three boats, armed with swivels, taken from the fort (the bateau from Kaskaskia had not yet arrived), under the command of Major Legare and fifty volunteer militia, started on the expedition up the river.

Goodspeed says in his history: "They journeyed up it and stopped at the foot of an island at Belgrade, under overhanging willows, and there the boats were tied up and a party with light canoes were sent to explore the waters above." At Point Coupe, about sunrise the next morning, the descending fleet, consisting of seven bateaux, was

descried. Frederick Mehl, one of the Virginia troops, who led the reconnoitering party, pulled rapidly back to Bowman and gave information of the strength of the approaching fleet. On the evening of the 2d day of March the unsuspecting Canadians came into the narrow channel between the island and main shore, where the Americans lay entrenched. A cry of "Round to and come ashore," was the first intimation the party from Detroit received that an enemy of the King's lay in these waters. The hail was quickly responded to when followed by a shot fired across the path of the descending fleet, and a demand made for its surrender. Bowman sent out boats with Major Legare, who ordered those in charge to make fast to the shore. When this was done Adimar, a captain of the commissary, formally turned over the fleet, with thirty-eight private soldiers as prisoners, and stores and provisions and baled goods.

The expedition returned at once to the town and the soldiers and boats, filled with booty, were turned over to the American commander. This capture, with that of the fort in the town, yielded Clark seventy-nine prisoners, besides officers, twelve pieces of artillery and stores to the amount of 50,000 pounds.

On March 7th Captain Williams and Lieutenant Rogers, with a detail of twenty-five men, were ordered to escort the prisoners to the Ohio Falls, among whom were Governor Hamilton, Major John Hay, Captain Lamont, Lieutenant Schiffin, Monsieur de Jean, the Grand Judge of Detroit, Pierre Andre, his partner, Dr. McEboth, Francois Masonville and Mr. Bell Fenibb, together with eighteen privates; many others were paroled.

Lieutenant Rogers had orders to conduct them to Williamsburg, Virginia, from the Falls, where they were ironed and confined in jail until September 25th following, when they were ordered to Hanover Court-House, where they were released on parole, to remain within certain limits.

Thus ended General George Rogers Clark's campaign against the English in the Northwest, achieving victories as brilliant as any recorded in American history, whose far-reaching and beneficent results were commensurate with the most astute diplomacy the Nation has evolved.

Following the capture of Vincennes by General Clark, with Virginia and volunteer troops from Illinois, in 1779, and the treaty of peace with Great Britain having been made in 1783, with the United States, Virginia ceded the conquered territory of the Northwest to the United States in 1784. In 1787 the Northwestern Territory, embracing the regions between the Ohio and Mississippi rivers and the Great Lakes of the north, was organized. Congress, in 1788, appointed Arthur Sinclair Governor of this Territory, with his capital at Marietta, Ohio, and he appointed Winthrop Sargent, in 1790, to come to Vincennes to lay out a county and to establish a court. The county was named Knox, in honor of General Henry Knox, then Secretary of War; and for a like reason, in 1788, while Major Hamtranck was stationed here, at the suggestion of General Harmar, Fort Patrick Henry was changed, in name, to that of Fort Knox.

May 7, 1800, the Territory of Indiana was organized, including in its boundaries Michigan and Illinois (its population then being 4,875), under the name of Knox county, and its capital established at Vincennes.



In 1800 General William Henry Harrison was appointed Governor of the Territory, but he did not enter upon his duties until January, 1801. A Territorial Government was then formed, but the legislative branch did not organize until the 29th of July, 1805, when it met in the house on the south corner of Broadway and Second streets;\* a little later, in 1809, in the first court house erected on the northwest corner of Buntin and Third streets. There is another contention as to the house and place of meeting of the Territorial Legislature, and that is that it met in the upper rooms of the two-story frame building on the southwest side of Main street, about the center of the block, between Second and Third streets, access to it being by an outside stairway. I think these discrepancies may be reconciled by supposing that the legislative body did meet at the respective buildings named. The first meetings occurred on Broadway; subsequently they were held in the first court house, and finally in the building on Main street, just preceding the removal of the seat of government to Corydon. The latter building is said to have been removed to Upper Third street, this side of the park, and near the southwest corner of Third and Hickman streets. What makes the latter statement plausible is the fact that a house stands at the point indicated, the southwestern side, showing, by the pieced weatherboarding, that an outside stairway once gave entrance to the upper rooms. The house is in a fair state of preservation and is owned by Mr. Thomas Murphy, who inherited it from an aunt. The house, he says, was moved from Main street in 1858 to the present site. It is said by renters

---

\* W. H. Smith Hist. Ind., p. 200.

who occupy it now that the upper part of the building contained originally but one room, about twenty feet square, but is now divided into smaller rooms. Mr. Murphy showed the writer an iron lock, taken off the cellar door, of huge proportions, weighing several pounds, 8x12 inches in width and length, with a key about ten inches in length and weighing one-half pound. They are thought to be of English manufacture, the tumbler and key being of an intricate nature, and well fitted to baffle lock-pickers and burglars. The lock was probably used to secure valuables and gives color to the claim that the house was once the meeting place of the Legislature, or was the office of the receiver of public moneys. It is in a fair working condition, despite the ravages of the rust of time, and works and looks as if it could endure use another century. Governor Harrison retained his office a year after he fought the battle of Tippecanoe, when he resigned, having been appointed to command the Army of the Northwest, on the 24th day of September, 1812. General Thomas Posey succeeded him and was installed May 25, 1813. On June 30, 1805, Michigan Territory was set off from Indiana Territory, and March 1, 1809, Illinois was detached from it, leaving Indiana Territory with its present boundaries. Vincennes ceased to be the capital March 11, 1813, it then being moved to Corydon, where, on June 10th, the first meeting of the convention to form a State Constitution met. Corydon continued to be the capital until the Territory assumed statehood, in 1816, when it was moved to its present site, the city of Indianapolis.

## Chapter III.

### FORTS—TOWN AND COUNTY.

THE first authentic mention of the erection of a fort at the trading Indian village, Chē-pe-ko-ke, the site of the city of Vincennes, is found in a letter\* written by Morgan de Vincennes, March 7, 1733, and was in answer to his superior officer, asking what progress he had made in establishing a post at this place, he having been ordered here through an edict from the French Government, which was dated Paris, France, January 1, 1731. Many efforts had been previously made to get a post established here by the commandant of the "Illinois country" and interested trading companies, but had failed up to this time. It would take some time for the order to reach this country, and the likelihood is that it did not reach Vincennes before the latter part of the year 1731, or the beginning of 1732. This view of the case may be inferred, as the records show that he only drew one-half pay in 1731 for services at this post, and full pay in 1732. In his answer to his superior he stated that he had built a fort and two houses, but needed a barracks, thirty more soldiers and an officer. This statement, made in March, 1733, indicates the erection of the fort the previous year, and that the year 1732 is, no doubt, when the first fort was built. Having been called to Louisiana in 1736, with

---

\* Ind. Hist. Pub. for 1902, p. 29.





FORT SACKVILLE, AS REPAIRED AND ENLARGED BY GOVERNOR HENRY HAMILTON IN 1778.

his command, to join other troops from the South, to give battle to the Chickasaw Nation, he was slain there, and the fort at the Indian village was, in memory of him, christened Fort St. Vincent, and was known by that name until changed by the next commander, Louis St. Ange, to his own name, by which it was known until this part of the country was ceded by France to England.

Colonel Ramsey, on taking possession of the fort in the name of Great Britain, renamed it Fort Sackville, in honor of an English soldier and statesman, then in the zenith of his glory and popular favor in 1764.\*

There has been some difference of opinion as to the exact location of the fort on account of the tendency of some to multiply the old defenses of the town. Beyond doubt it was located on the ground in front of the old Catholic church, as it looked northwest, and included lots numbers 34, 35, 24 and 25, near the river bank, and lots numbers 23 and 26 on the north, reaching to Vigo street, according to the plat of the city by Emison & Johnson, made in 1821. The town was not before laid off, and the streets made by the aforesaid survey and lots numbered, I think, give the exact location, and a good idea may be formed of it by the following boundaries: Taking the river as one side, Barnett street as another; a line parallel with the church property looking north as another, and Vigo street as the last. The fort and the church faced each other, the former looking southeast, the latter northwest, the two being, it is recorded, about eighty yards

---

\* George G. Sackville was an English Viscount, and served with distinction in the British army in 1743-69; was Secretary of State, for the colonies, during the Revolution, and especially distinguished for his bitterness toward them. Born, 1716: died, 1785. Supposed to be the author of the Letters of Junius.—Peoples' Encyclopedia, Vol. II, p. 1533.

apart. The ground occupied by the fort, as represented in Goodspeed's History, was an irregular inclosure, being about sixty feet at the narrowest part, and two hundred in width, containing between two and three acres. As to the character of the defenses of the fort, discrepancies exist. The historian above alluded to says: "Upon the river's side, and within forty feet of the water's edge, two lines of palisades, reaching twenty feet above the surface of the earth, constructed of large timbers from the forest, planted firmly in the ground, were backed by a line of earthworks thrown up about eight feet high, behind which were mounted four six-pounders, *en barbette*. Along the line of Vigo street, at right angles with the river, and crossing First street, was the principal entrance, a gateway; and opening upon the latter highway, protected by this, were similar lines of defense, protected by guns of the same caliber at each angle, mounted upon platforms of heavy timbers. At the elevation of twenty-five feet at each side of the gateway were swivels, trained to command the approach along the street. The entire walls were pierced at convenient heights by a row of port holes, from which musketry could be fired. A similar palisade, defended by two guns of ten-pound caliber, protected the flank next to the church in the rear of the works, south of Barnett street, where there were two towers, or bastions, pierced for musketry, made exceptionally strong against an assault by a line of heavy timbers joined tightly together and covered with earth. Within the fortifications were barracks for one thousand men, a magazine and officers' quarters."

Other pictures of the fort do not show that it was a formidable one at the time it was delivered to Captain Helm,



on August 6, 1778, or when Hamilton recaptured it from Helm, in December following, for he described it as a very poor affair, and gave immediate attention to strengthening the defenses, and said: "I built a guard house, barracks for four companies, sunk a well and constructed two large block houses of oak with embrasures above for five pieces of cannon each; altered and lined the stockades, and laid the fort with gravel." And, in speaking of his surrender, and giving a reason for it, he said: "The officers, who had continued in tents all winter, were exposed to the fire of the enemies' riflemen, as the picketing of the fort was so poorly set up that one might pass the clenched hand between the timbers of the stockades." Count Volney, who visited Vincennes in 1796, in speaking of the defenses, says: "Adjoining the village is a space inclosed by a ditch eight feet wide and sharpened stakes six feet high. This is called the fort, and is a sufficient protection against the Indians."\*

It will be seen by the foregoing description that the fort must have been as it was when "added to and remodeled" by Hamilton, and at its best; and that by Count Volney, seventeen years later, when it had become deteriorated, and when forts in this region were becoming more ornamental than useful.

As to the number of forts said to have been erected in Vincennes, the writer addressed an inquiry to an official of the War Department, Washington, D. C., asking if there was any evidence on file there showing that there was ever more than one fort erected here, and if so, had it ever been moved out of the town. The following reply was

---

\* Goodspeed, Hist. Knox County, p. 235.

received: "The following writers, who have said more or less on the history of Fort Sackville (otherwise known as Fort St. Vincent, Fort Patrick Henry and possibly identical with Fort Knox), make no mention of it ever having been removed from its original location: Butler's History of Kentucky, Dunn's History of Indiana, Brown's Old Northwest, Albuck's Annals of the West, Brice's History of Ft. Wayne, Davidson & Stevenson's History of Illinois, Law's History of Vincennes and Dr. Hass' Indian Wars of West Virginia."

Dunn, in his history (p. 265) says: "A fort was built in 1787 and named Fort Knox by General Harmar." This is evidently a mistake, but one that might have been easily fallen into. At the time specified Major Hamtranck was in command of this post, when some correspondence occurred between General Harmar, then at his post in Cincinnati, and Major Hamtranck, located at "Post Vincennes," which in part is as follows:

"Fort Harmar, October 13, 1788.

"Dear Major— \* \* \* Let your fort be named Fort Knox, etc."

One need not conclude, from this expression of General Harmar, that a new fort had been built. There was precedent and reason why the name of the old fort should be changed. First, For many years the name of the fort at Vincennes had been changed by each successive commander; second, General Knox was then Secretary of War and it would be paying him a compliment to give the fort his name. On the accession of Virginia to the ownership

of the country the fort's name was changed from the name, of Sackville, to that of Fort Patrick Henry (the then Governor and Commander-in-chief of the Virginia forces), by General Clark. Third, Why would Hamtranck desire to build the fort when there was one already constructed? In 1788 the rights of Virginia had passed to the United States Government, when a United States army officer was placed in charge of the post; then the pretty compliment to the Secretary of War, General Knox, was suggested by General Hammar to Major Hamtranck: "Let your fort be named Fort Knox."

A further extract from the official of the War Department above mentioned says: "As there seems to be no mention of the construction of this fort (Fort Knox), it is quite correct to suppose that it was identical with Post Vincennes, and that the change of name was merely one of honor (to General Knox) and was made in connection with the revival of the military at that post, under the direction of Major Hamtranck." And thus it was that Fort Knox, by the stroke of the pen, which is sometimes mightier than the sword, without the aid of axe, pick or shovel, sprang into existence, and by its metamorphosis Major Hamtranck has given historians a world of trouble in regard to this alleged new fort. From the same War Department official I will further quote, as follows: "Dunn, in addition to this, states immediately after the surrender of Fort Sackville, the name was changed to Fort Patrick Henry, by which name *it was known for about ten years.*"

Let it be remembered that the life of Fort Patrick Henry was just about the lapse of time needed to inaugurate another name—Fort Knox—by Major Hamtranck.



As there is no record of a second fort having been built here, or removed elsewhere, the only rational solution for the discrepancies that can be found is in the change in names, as suggested, and no new fort was erected at that time. If Major Hamtranck actually built a fort in Vincennes in 1788, as some historians assert, where was that fort in 1796, only eight years later, when Count Volney, a distinguished French traveler, visited and remained some days here, and described the town? Mention was made by him of but one fort, and to suppose that this one was the new alleged fort built by Major Hamtranck is to suppose an unreasonable thing. At the time of the alleged building of a second fort for defense the necessity for forts was passing away, and dismantling them was the order of the day, if the condition of Fort Knox was truly represented by Count Volney when he wrote of it in 1796. At that time the Red Man was turning his face toward the West, to return no more, and Great Britain had been whipped into good behavior. Thus it will be seen that Vincennes never had but one real fort, although during the passing years subsequent to its erection and the successive officials controlling it it received many names, viz.: Fort Vincennes, in honor of Morgan de Vincennes, the founder of the village, a French officer sent here to build the fort and be its commander; St. Ange, in honor of his successor; Fort Sackville, in honor of Lord Sackville, an English General and nobleman; Fort Patrick Henry, in honor of the then Governor of Virginia, and, finally, Fort Knox, in honor of General Henry Knox, Secretary of War in 1788, when one officer sought to compliment his superior, as other officers stationed here had done before, by calling it Fort Knox.

Another statement has been made that the alleged fort was built by Hamtranck early in July, 1788, and that it was moved to a site three miles up the river on the east bank of the same. The fact is, Major Hamtranck did not arrive at Vincennes until July 25 of that year to be commandant of the post. And no evidence exists to show that he built a fort here, except the mere suggestion of General Harmar, October 13, 1788, "Let your fort be called Fort Knox"; nor is there any evidence to show that Fort Knox, or any other fort, was removed from Vincennes to any place outside of town.

There is a tradition existing that the French citizens living in the vicinity of the fort complained to Governor Harrison that the soldiers at the garrison gave them great annoyance and petitioned him to remove them; that he gave heed to their prayer, and that in 1803 the garrison was removed to the high ground facing Buntin street, west of Water street, about the place where the Baltimore & Ohio Southwestern Railway freight depot stands, and that the palisades of the old fort were used in making the new one.\* The late A. B. McKee told the writer some years ago that one of his aunts, a Mrs. Buntin, "Alice of Old Vincennes," who lived just above the Broadway mill site, told him that by looking out at her window north she could see a fort. And tradition says that the palisades of the old fort were used to build it. My investigations in relation to these traditions corroborate the contentions. After Governor Harrison came here the United States troops were mostly withdrawn from this post, and militia troops took their place. This being the case, he would

---

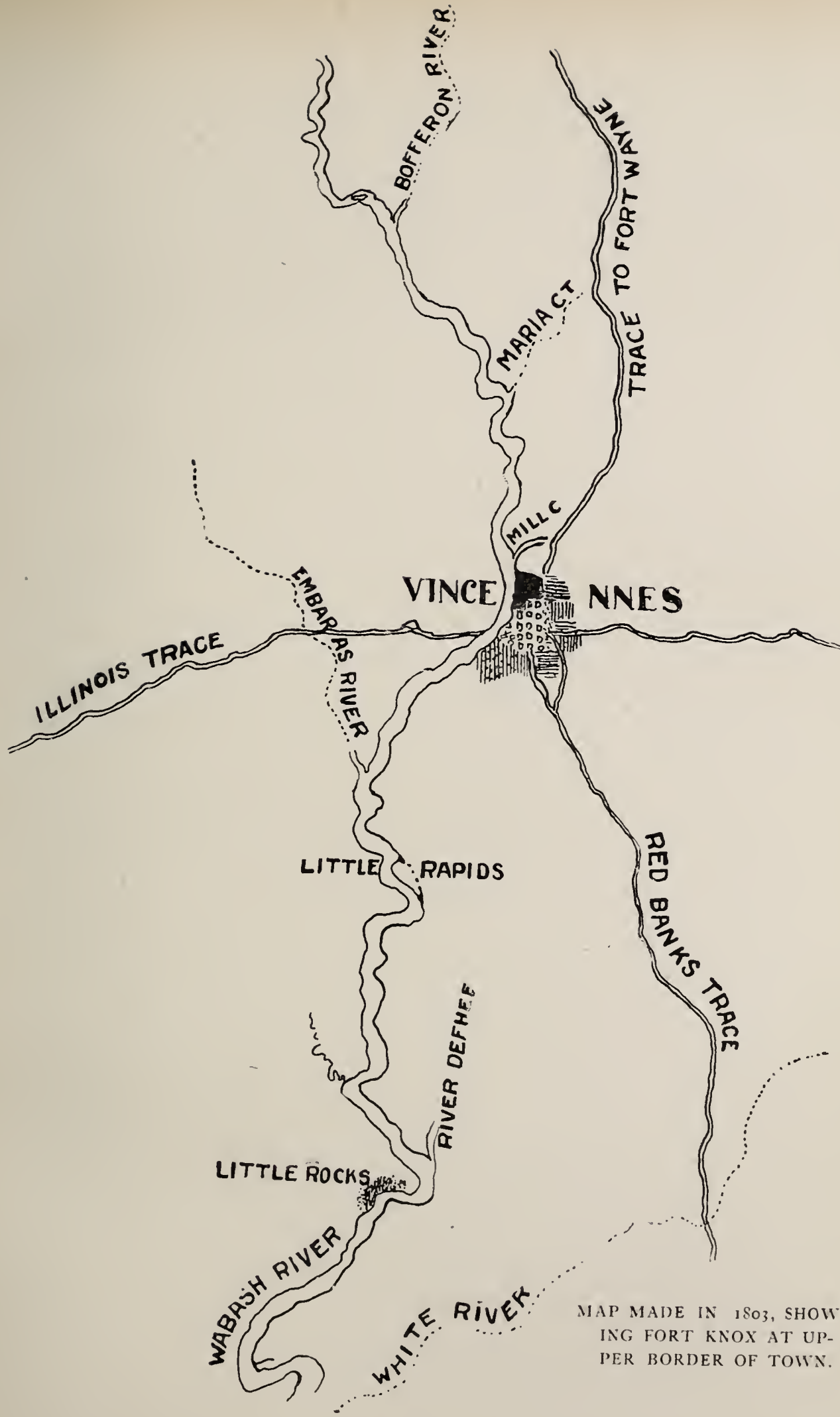
\* Hist. Knox County, p. 239. (This is an error, as to date, as fort was standing there in 1803; see accompanying map.)—Author.

have jurisdiction over the defenses and management of the garrison, hence we can readily see that the Governor might wish to please the people and grant their prayer for the removal of the soldiers. Another consideration might have influenced him to take this step, and that is, that the garrison moved up to the position named would be nearer his residence, and could the more readily protect him in case of an Indian attack. As no record exists on file at the War Department in Washington City of the removal of the fort, the foregoing explanation given may account for the existence of the second one, called Fort Knox. No published record exists, to the author's knowledge, of this second fort, but from facts recently developed\* he is constrained to accept the traditions as facts, for the following reasons: First, Through his friend, Honorable Charles G. McCord, Abstractor of Land Titles, an old deed was discovered which General W. H. Harrison made to one George Wallace in 1804. In the description of the property mentioned in this deed the instrument recites: "Beginning at a place situate about 210 yards above Fort Knox, at Vincennes aforesaid, called the Stone landing place," etc. This description indicates that the fort occupied the ground covered now in part by the Baltimore & Ohio Southwestern Railway freight depot, on the west side of Water street. Second, The writer has a map in his possession which is a certified copy of one of the Vincennes Land Districts, made in 1803, by Thomas Freeman, the original being in the archives of the War Department, on which a fort is indicated, and it was doubtless the one mentioned in describing the property in the deed from Harrison to Wallace.

---

\* Deed Rec. Book B, 155, Vincennes.





MAP MADE IN 1803, SHOW-  
ING FORT KNOX AT UP-  
PER BORDER OF TOWN.

The tradition that a fort was built here in 1788 by Major Hamtranck, and afterwards removed to a site three miles above the city, on the east bank of the Wabash river, about the year 1812, is not substantiated by facts. What could have been the object of removing the fort from town to an isolated place up the river about three miles? The fort was for the protection of the citizens of the town. Upon the map above alluded to, and here given, such a fort is not designated, although the mouth of Mill creek (now called Kelso's creek) is plainly discernable, and the mouth of Maria creek, ten miles above the city, is also to be seen. If a fort had been there it would have been plainly marked on this map. That a United States garrison was at the point now called "Fort Knox" is not questioned, but that it contained a United States fort and removed there from the town is not presumable, for the further reasons that no record of it exists in the War Department, and from the following additional fact that I now give:

Through Mr. C. G. McCord the writer has seen an instrument of writing wherein eighty-five acres of land was secured from Jeremiah Buckley for the use of a garrison in 1803 by the United States Government, and for which his heirs were paid the sum of "two hundred and eighty dollars in full compensation for the use made of the timber and land while the troops of the United States occupied the said land."\* It makes no mention of a fort being there, but distinctly states the land was for garrison purposes. This land embraces what is called "Fort Knox."

---

\* See Act of Congress, July, 1832—Record R. p. 48.

Why a garrison was established up the river three miles is only conjectural. As some United States troops had to be retained in this region so as to be near at hand in case of raids by Indians in the county, and to give them something to do in the way of tilling the soil and exercise, and thereby lightening the expense of the commissariat, may have been, and doubtless were, the reasons for a transfer of a portion, if not all, of Fort Knox's garrison to that place; and when the fort was dismantled and its inmates removed up the river it is presumed the place was dubbed, by courtesy, Fort Knox. The spot the garrison occupied is a picturesque one, of which a pretty picture is given in this connection, and it has been a popular place for picnics and members of the boating club and their fair young companions, and doubtless will be in all time to come, in memory of the soldiers once stationed there and for its beauty.\*

Until the writer investigated the history of our city he had supposed that the site was once occupied by a neighborhood fort, like a dozen other so-called forts in different parts of the country; for instance, those in Widner were called Fort Widner, Fort Chambers, Fort Lemon, Fort Polk and Fort Taylor; the largest of these, Widner, containing three-quarters of an acre of ground, was what is called a stockade fort. One was at Emison's Mill, eight miles above the city, and one at Bruceville; another in Busseron township, called "Ochiltree Fort," near the celebrated pear tree, "which was twelve feet in circumference at the base, one hundred and twenty feet in height and had a lateral spread of one hundred and twenty-six feet, yield-

---

\* See Act of Congress, July, 1832; Record R, p. 48, at Court House.



ing annually fifty bushels of fruit.”\* Another existed in Palmyra township, called “Roe’s Fort,” and one at Purcell’s. The one erected at Emison’s Mill, owing to the fact that most of the men were absent on duty, and the garrison consisted of ladies, was dubbed “Fort Petticoat.”†

The laudable suggestions that have been made from time to time that memorials be placed to mark noted places in the early history of our city are to be commended, and if practicable should be acted upon. But the first step should be the erection of a monument to the memory of George Rogers Clark. Yet, if our patriotism becomes so broadened as to embrace every so-called fort that once existed in this region, I fear that our benevolence will be overtaxed, and failure will follow.

#### CAMP KNOX.

Camp Knox is so closely connected with the history of Old Vincennes that it deserves a niche in this volume. It was the site of a garrison of United States soldiers early in the last century, whither they were removed from Fort Knox in the village. It is situated three miles above the city on a bluff of the eastern bank of the Wabash river. It overlooks the river far into Illinois, and beautiful views present themselves to the eye, as the borders of the landscape on either shore are set with silver linings by the environment of water, which calmly reflects grove and sky, or dances in coruscating, sunlit wavelets in answer to the calling winds.

While the garrison was stationed there, the home of Dr. Samuel McKee, United States Army Surgeon, was the ob-

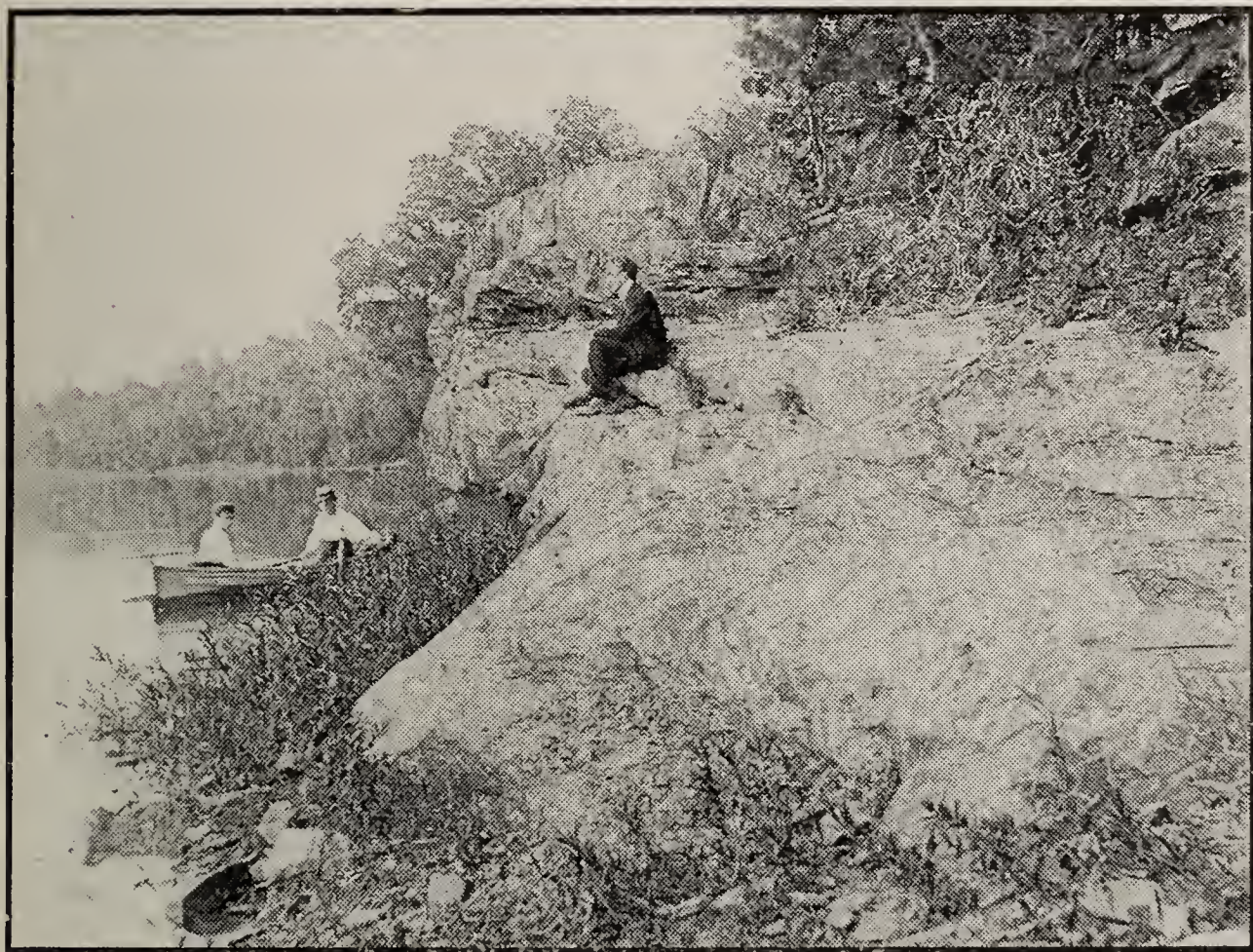
---

\* History Knox County, p. 72.

† History Knox County, p. 77.



jective point of frequent outings of Governor William Henry Harrison and his friends, the Governor often remarking that the viands served out there seemed more tasteful than those in town.\*



CAMP KNOX. SITE OF A GARRISON OF UNITED STATES ARMY. ESTABLISHED IN 1803.†

When the soldiers were encamped there it was, without doubt, a central place of interest to the country folk, as well as the denizens of the town, as little toil, plenty of leisure and amusements combined to enliven the barracks

---

\* This information came from the late A. B. McKee, who was a son of the Surgeon, received through his aunt, Mrs. Capt. Robert Buntin, then a resident of Vincennes.

† Camp Knox, the Second, had its origin during the early days of the Civil War, and was located northeast of the city one mile.



days and months; but with the passing away of the "pomp and circumstance of war," the crumbling, corroding hand of time and decay robbed it of its artificial glory, strewn there by the hand of art, and left it for Nature to restore to it again its pristine beauty and loveliness. And yet, bereft of its camp adornments, it presents many points of attraction, and needs only a willing hand, reinforced by taste and enterprise, to restore to it the glory of the past.

Its inaccessibility to visitors, except by water, prevents it from becoming a place of more frequent resort for the worshipers of beautiful scenery. By row or sail boat nothing is more inviting than a jaunt on the "rolling deep," in spring's balmy mornings, when the shores of the river are garlanded with myriads of flowers, or in autumn's calm, invigorating evenings, when the parti-colored foliage of October, in the adjacent forest-lined shores, rivals in beauty the shimmering meteoric showers that stud the firmament during the twilight-ides of a November evening.

Yet unadorned by the hand of art, it is an ideal spot for lads and lassies to while away the rosy hours of day, as "love's young dream" clothes it with a halo of glory, while woodland songsters warble their sweetest notes, embowered in the shady groves, and the piping notes of quail and lark echo back responses from copse and bush.

But in contemplating these scenes, a tinge of sadness casts a shadow on the wings of thought, as one realizes that within these precincts forgotten heroes lie, "unwept, unhonored and unsung," who will never more waken until Eternity's reveille is sounded on the receding shores of time.



## PEACE TO THEIR ASHES.

They served their country in its time of need,  
And though remembered not, in name or deed,  
Their resting place, although their souls have fled,  
Should sacred be, in memory of the dead;  
And honored be the hands, in spring's bright hours,  
That strew their lonely graves with beauteous flowers.



SUPPOSED LAST TERRITORIAL LEGISLATIVE MEETING HALL.

## Chapter IV.

### FIRST TOWN AND COUNTY ORGANIZATIONS.

SUBSEQUENT to the capture of Post Vincennes by Colonel Clark, Colonel John Todd was appointed Governor and commandant of it, by the executive and legislative council of Virginia, whose conduct seems to have been erratic and brief. He arrived in May, 1779. While here he exercised autocratic powers and disposed of much of the public domain, although the Virginia Legislature had forbidden such action. He organized a court with the following appointees: Colonel Le Gras, Louis Ediline, Pierre Gamelin, and Pierre Quarez; Le Gras becoming secretary. But it seems that Governor Todd soon tired of this field of labor and sought greener pastures and a more inviting and extensive plane upon which his genius might disport and expand, and left this place for Kaskaskia. But, before leaving, he delegated his powers to Mr. Le Gras, his substitute at the Post, who seems to have had fewer scruples on the subject of the right to dispose of lands than his superior, Governor Todd. Not only did he exercise the power of disposing of public domain, but he delegated it to the county court, composed of four judges, organized under the act of Virginia, and which held their sessions at Vincennes. They did a wholesale business in the way of disposing of the public domain, not only to others, but to them-



selves, not only by the arpent, but by "leagues." The way it is reported to have been done is this: Three of the four judges were left on the bench, while one retired. The court then made a grant of so many leagues of land to their absent colleague, which act of theirs was entered of record; he returned as soon as the grant was recorded, and another of these "ermined" gentlemen left the bench, while the chief justice and the other judges made similar grants to their absent friend, said friend returning after such grant was duly entered of record; and so with the fourth.\*

But little is recorded of the doings of this court, except the granting to each other good sized farms belonging to the domain of Uncle Sam. Of these grants to themselves and their friends in 1783, 26,000 acres was the sum total, and by the year 1787 it had reached the figures of 48,000. The transactions of this court having been reported to the Washington Government in 1790, Winthrop Sargent, Secretary of the United States for the Northwest Territory, was ordered to investigate the matter. Calling upon this court, organized by Governor Todd and given extraordinary powers, for their reasons for their actions in these matters, the members of this august tribunal, through their spokesman, replied as follows: "That since the establishment of this country, the commandants have always appeared to be vested with the power to grant lands; their founder, M. de Vincennes, began to give concessions, and all his successors have given and granted lands and lots. Mr. Le Gras was appointed Commandant of Post Vincennes by the lieutenant of the country, and Commander-in-Chief John Todd, who, in the year 1799 was sent by

---

\* Law's History, pp. 110, 111.



the State of Virginia to regulate the government of the country, and who substituted Mr. Le Gras with such powers. In his absence, Mr. Le Gras, who was then commandant, assumed that he had equal power from the commandant in authority to give lands according to ancient usages of other commandants; and he verbally informed the court of the Post of Vincennes that when they would judge it proper to give lots or lands they might do it."

A commission was appointed to examine these claims, and as a specimen, the claim of a Mr. Thomas Flower may be given. He claimed an undivided third of a grant made by Pierre Quarez & Son of a tract of land beginning at the River Maria, to White river, about ten leagues deep, excluding from said grant any land that may have been granted. This claim of Mr. Flower, as assigned to Pierre Gamelin, amounted to 40,000 acres. The Todd court and these fraudulent claims having been set aside, Secretary Sargent proceeded to organize Knox county, which embraced the Territories of Indiana and Michigan, and establish courts having civil and criminal jurisdiction, and they were proclaimed organized in June, 1790, the first session being held July 14, 1790, by the judges appointed, to wit: Antoine Gamelin, Paul Gamelin, Francis Busseron, James Johnson and Luke Decker. This court was abolished when the Territory was established, May 7, 1800, and William Clark, Henry Vanderburgh and John Griffin were appointed by an Act of Congress. The first term of this last court was held in February, 1801, the session being held in rented property until 1809, in a house owned by L. Bazadon, corner Second and Broadway streets; when the brick court house was erected on the corner of Fourth and Buntin

streets, the sessions were then held there. This property was sold and another building erected (on the square on which the present temple of justice stands), which was contracted for in 1831 and finished in 1832; but it, in turn, was demolished in 1873, when the present magnificent building was erected at a cost of a half million dollars. The courts prevailing here for half a century or more were the Circuit, Probate and Court of Common Pleas. The circuit judges presiding had jurisdiction in half a dozen counties, holding court alternately in each, hence the names circuit judges and circuit courts.

As population and business increased, it was found necessary to change the district, and in 1872 the law was changed so that a judge should confine his jurisdiction to this city, and the Court of Common Pleas was then abolished, the business of that court being transferred to the Circuit Court and the circuit judge presided over the consolidated courts.

The Circuit Court as established at this time is as follows: Circuit Judge, Orlando F. Cobb; Prosecuting Attorney, W. S. Hoover; Circuit Clerk, James F. Lewis; Sheriff, Andrew Summitt; and the balance of the county officers are as follows: Treasurer, C. A. Weisert; Recorder, Frank T. Emison; Auditor, James D. Williams; Assessor, John M. Stork; Commissioners, Henry Frederick, John W. McGowen, Isaac Henderson; Coroner, H. W. Held, M. D.; Superintendent Public Schools, Peter Philipi; County Physician, Doctor Norman Beckes, and County Secretary of the State Board of Health, Lyman M. Beckes, M. D.

## TOWN GOVERNMENT—OLD TOWN HALL.

No kind of civil government can be said to have been established in Vincennes or the Territory of the Northwest prior to the arrival of John Todd, Esq., in June, 1779, who, it is said, acting under a law passed by the Virginia Legislature, established civil and criminal courts; but they proved to be inefficient and ephemeral in character to such a degree that Winthrop Sargent, who was sent here to organize Knox county, said they "eked out of existence in the summer of 1787."

The county having been organized, the Courts of Quarter Sessions of the Peace and Common Pleas were instituted, and a probate judge appointed. But the government instituted by him bore equally on the whole territory as well as the town. The first town government was not organized until 1805, approved in 1807, and ordinances not published until 1809, in the *Western Sun* newspaper. The act of incorporating the town occurred on September 6, 1814, and was approved by the Territorial Legislature February 2, 1815. It embraced all that portion of land within the bounds of Hart street on the northeast, Eleventh street on the southeast, Willow street on the southwest, and the Wabash river on the northwest. The lands outside these boundaries, called Commons lands (not those embraced by donations), were given to the town of Vincennes by Congress, with the stipulation that the moneys arising from the sale thereof should be applied to the drainage of the swamp east of town, and that any surplus funds left, after such drainage was paid for, should accrue to the Vincennes University Fund (and not be used for town



purposes, as stated by Goodspeed in his History of Knox County).

These common lands amounted to 4,500 acres. The town officials sold them in part to the amount of \$24,224.69, but expended only \$15,500, retaining and spending the balance of \$8,724.69 for town purposes, con-



OLD TOWN HALL, ERECTED IN 1837.

trary to the act of Congress, the University getting nothing. The balance of the lands, if sold, were not accounted for up to 1870.\*

The town organization for a time consisted of a board of trustees, who elected their chairman, secretary and

---

\* Extract from the Report of Colonel C. M. Allen to Trustees of Vincennes University, as Chairman of Committee.

treasurer. The officers were elected by the people, and were a president, secretary and treasurer; all freeholders and housekeepers being deemed legal voters.

Ground for a market house was purchased, and a market-master appointed and ordered to inclose the same with a fence, with turnsiles at both ends for ingress and egress; and market day was to open at daylight and close at 9 a. m., the opening being announced by the blowing of a horn. In 1819 the trustees initiated the first fire company by providing "six fire hooks and ladders" and requiring "every family to provide themselves with two two-gallon leathern buckets; but where but one chimney existed only one was required." Every citizen was constituted a volunteer member of the fire brigade. In 1830 a Board of Health was constituted by the appointment of Doctors J. D. Wolverton, Joseph Somes and William Dinwiddie. In 1831 the General Assembly passed an act granting a city charter, to be passed on by the voters; R. P. Price, Judge John B. Martin and Joseph Roseman, Secretaries. The vote was small, resulting in twenty-three for and twenty against it. The charter was not considered legal and was not granted.

The charter was afterwards amended so that the town government should be known as the President and Trustees of the Borough of Vincennes. A town hall was erected in 1837, and subsequently had a market attachment, or wings added to it, under the same roof, about thirty feet wide and forty feet long, divided in stalls, where market was held tri-weekly. Greengrocers having subsequently supplied the place of the market, the old hall was demolished and the present beautiful structure was erected on the old site in 1886.



This form of government obtained until 1852, when a city charter was granted, which was amended on January 25, 1855, so as to create the present form for the government of the city, embracing the following officers: Mayor, Clerk, Civil Engineer, City Board of Health, Policé, Weighmaster and City Attorney. The present incumbents of office are: Mayor, George W. Rousch; Treasurer, Thos. Eastham; Clerk, Thomas Robinson; Attorney, Judge W. W. Moffatt; City Engineer, Jeremiah Hershy; President Board of Health, Dr. P. H. Caney; President Metropolitan Police Board, D. S. Bonner. The population of the city at present writing is about 12,000.

#### GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTIONS—LAND OFFICE.

Not many of the present generation are aware that the first land office established in the West was located at Vincennes by an act of Congress, passed and approved March 26, 1804. As the lands had to be surveyed and other preliminaries attended to before the office could be placed in operation, it did not open until 1807. The first Register appointed was Louis Jean Badollet (April 17, 1804), the grandfather of our worthy fellow-citizen, Henry Badollet, who held the position, by successive appointments, for thirty-two years, and until 1836, when his son, Albert Gallatin Badollet, was appointed to succeed him, and held the position until 1841.

There is a little romance connected with the appointment of the elder Badollet, as it was received through the influence of Albert Gallatin, who was then Secretary of the Treasury, under President Jefferson. Gallatin and



Badollet were natives of Switzerland, and when they had arrived at manhood in their native land, they both determined to emigrate to America together, but when they counted up their savings, it was found that their funds



JOHN BADOLLET.

were too small for the expenses of both; so they cast lots to decide which of the two should go first, and the lot fell to Gallatin. He was to go and send the first moneys received by him after arriving in America, for his friend Badollet. Gallatin, being exceptionally bright and enterprising, soon was so successful as to accumulate enough money to transmit to his delayed friend. In due time the two embraced each other on American soil, and for a

time settled in business in Pennsylvania, but ere long they drifted apart. Badollet married and settled down, while Gallatin entered into politics, and soon became a factor in national affairs. But they kept in close touch with each other, and when Mr. Gallatin was called to the cabinet of Mr. Jefferson, Mr. Badollet having removed to Vincennes, the latter, through the efforts of his friend Gallatin, secured the appointment of Register of the Land Office at Vincennes. His faithful service kept him in the same office

for thirty-two years, and got the appointment of his son to succeed him. Dr. H. Decker succeeded Albert G. Badollet in April, 1844, who in turn was succeeded by John Meyers in 1841; he by James S. Mayes, January, 1847; he by John C. Clark, June, 1849; he by John R. Jones, in May, 1853, and he by James S. Mayes, in September, 1856. The office was closed June 12, 1850, but reopened by executive order April 23, 1853, when Jones received his appointment, and the office was finally closed December 20, 1861.

Nathaniel Ewing, one of the most distinguished early settlers, a man of commanding influence and wealth, and grandfather of our worthy fellow-townsmen, the Honorable W. L. Ewing, was the first Receiver of the Land Office, and was appointed in May, 1807. He retained office under four or five administrations, and until 1824, when he was succeeded by J. C. S. Harrison, son of Governor Harrison, February, 1824; he by John D. Wolverton, June, 1830; he by James P. Drake, August, 1834; he by John Love, July, 1838; he by Thomas Scott, March, 1841; he by Samuel Wise, the uncle of our worthy fellow-citizens, Louis and John B. Wise, the only living male descendants of this numerous and prominent family of the early citizens of the town. Mr. Wise was succeeded by R. N. Carnan, the father of our fellow-citizen, William Carnan; he by John C. Heberd, uncle of the late William Heberd and closely related to many of our best citizens; he by J. H. E. Sprinkle, in March, 1858; he by George E. Green, former editor of the *Vincennes Sun*, and father of the ex-Mayor, George E. Green, and he by Abner T. Ellis, January, 1861, who was, in early days, one of the most

distinguished citizens of Vincennes, and first President of the Ohio & Mississippi Railroad. He held the position only until December 20, 1861, when the office was finally closed.

In 1853 most of the public domain in Indiana had been disposed of, and that was the reason assigned for the closing of the land office here at that time; but some swamp and hilly lands were yet owned by Uncle Sam, and the office was reopened by executive order to make a final disposition of them. To facilitate the sale of these waste lands, Congress passed a special act, reducing the price of them to twelve and a half cents per acre. There were many superior small tracts scattered over the State termed "lost lands," where no owners were visible, and many swamp lands that could easily be reclaimed, hence there was soon a rush to the Vincennes Land Office. And soon there was done, in this city, truly "a land office business"; for homeseekers and speculators crowded the office in real Oklahoma style, and but a few months elapsed until all the lands in the State were entered, and Vincennes ceased to be the Mecca of land brokers. In less than fifty-five years nine-tenths of the wild Indian lands of this vast Indiana Territory have been retrieved by the Caucasian race, through the hands of industry and thrift, and advanced to the present pinnacle of civilization, refinement and power, and until "Hoosierdom" is at a premium in science, literature and art.



## POSTOFFICE.

Wonderful changes have occurred in the postal system since a postoffice was first established in Vincennes. The first communication between this place and the land of civilization was through armed convoys, and at long intervals; then came the "post rider" with his big saddle-bags and his tin horn, which he blew stentoriously on nearing a wayside inn, postal station or town. In the early part of the nineteenth century the post rider gave way, on main or State roads, to the old stage coach, which continued to be the vehicle of conveyance of the mail and travelers for a full half century, and until the steamboat and railroad supplanted and relegated it to the rear, much to the sorrow of many of the old inhabitants, who had been accustomed for so many years to listen to the patter of the hoofs of the horses pulling the swaying old coach, and listening to the stageman's horn music as it floated out on the summer evening's air, sounding over hill and valley. Its music was the courier bearing good news from the outer world, and tidings from the busy throngs within the hives of civilization. But progress marks the westward tide of empire, and old things and practices must sooner or later give way to the new in the process of evolution, though they, in so doing, bury forever the sweetest memories of earlier years. In the new order of things, are the people happier now than then? The elderly say that those were the happiest days of their lives, when there was an absence of conventionalism, when everybody knew everybody else, and society was untrameled, save by the laws of justice, virtue and love. In the beginning of the

nineteenth century, when regular postal communication was established with the rest of the world, it required about six weeks to send and receive a reply to a letter in the East; now they are sent and the answers received in about four days, or less time.

The first postoffice established in Vincennes was when General W. Johnson, a distinguished and able man, and who has been noticed elsewhere, was appointed postmaster, on April 1, 1800. His successors have been the following, in the order named: Henry Hurst, April 1, 1802; Wm. B. Coupeland, July 1, 1802; William Prince, January 1, 1803; General W. Johnson, July 1, 1803; William Prince, March 31, 1812; John D. Hay, July 1, 1813; George R. C. Sullivan, March 8, 1817; Samuel Hill, April 5, 1827; John Scott, September 7, 1829; James W. Greenhow, September 27, 1843; Elihu Stout, August 16, 1845; Lewis L. Watson, May 12, 1849; James Dick, March 26, 1853; John Moore, April 6, 1857; Hubbard M. Smith, March 28, 1861; William N. Denny, April 8, 1869; William D. Lewis, January 30, 1882; James E. Kackley, May 26, 1885; Allen Tindolph, June 25, 1889; Royal E. Purcell, April 8, 1893, and Thomas H. Adams, May 13, 1897, who is the present incumbent, and who was reappointed May 13, 1902.

The Vincennes office was a receiving and distributing depot for the whole Northwest for many years; it received mail matter from adjacent offices when mail packages were made up for the important cities in the East. This office continued to be a distributing one, within circumscribed boundaries, as the North and West became settled, until about 1864, and the postmaster's salary was regulated by

the amount of matter handled by him, he being allowed a per cent. for receiving and remailing the postal matter. About this time the law was changed and the office became a salaried one, the amount being regulated and based upon the local business, and that law yet obtains. During the time that Hubbard M. Smith held the position of postmaster, the money order business was established, and the postmaster was allowed a small per cent. upon the number of orders issued, this being the only perquisite additional to his salary. When the office was a per cent. one, unless the sum exceeded \$5,000 per annum, the postmaster received only the per cent., let it be little or much, without any allowance for clerk hire; if the business exceeded \$5,000, then he received a \$5,000 salary and clerk hire. This law was unjust and inequitable, and the postmaster had to pay out sometimes almost as much for assistants as his personal salary amounted to. During the Civil War, when the mails became heavy, \$300 per annum was allowed for a clerk. The business demanded two assistants, and the postmaster was expected to make up the deficiencies for clerk hire from his own pocket. During the first years of the Civil War, the postmaster paid out nearly all he received from the Government for the clerical force of the office, and a mere pittance remained for his own services. But about 1867, the postmaster, in making up his quarterly reports, added to his expense account the sum of \$90 and the Department was kind and considerate enough to allow same in his annual settlement. This stretch of benevolence and justice did not show itself in all of the departments of the Government. As a matter of history, the



writer should add an additional word about “shin plaster,” as our postal currency was denominated during the Civil War. Some of the old inhabitants will remember that after the war had well commenced, all gold disappeared from circulation, and soon followed the disappearance of silver coin. The people were put to such straits for small change that a few men issued personal checks, from five cents up to fifty, one Watson, at Terre Haute, and one James, at Rockport, I think, supplying the demand. The Government at last came to the rescue and issued postal currency of the denominations of five, ten, twenty-five and fifty cents. A batch of \$6,000 was sent to the postmaster here and he was held responsible for same, in good money, whether it was burned or stolen. It was to be given out to business men for greenbacks, as change. It did not prove a bonanza to the postmaster. But the tale is too long to tell and I will only cite the reader to what was one of his “tales of woe” incident thereto. In those days the older citizens will remember that the only money in circulation was greenbacks and postal currency, individual promissory notes, and counterfeit bills were not infrequent; and all mutilated bills, whether treasury notes or postal bills, were required to be accepted for postage stamps by the postmaster, he being ordered so to do, and to transmit the same by mail to the Treasurer of the United States, who was to return a draft in exchange for same to the postmaster. Postmaster Smith, by order, was compelled to comply with this unjust ruling, as will be shown. He was fortunate in getting equivalents back after transmissions generally, but he was “left with the pouch to hold” on one batch sent off to the amount of \$43. Although sent from his office in

a through brass lock pouch for Indianapolis, the mail train was burned on which this pouch was being carried, and because no speck of the bills was found by the special mail agent, W. N. Tyner, refusal was made of payment to the postmaster. It was proved by witnesses that the money was mailed, and that it was wholly burned, but because no vestige of the bills was found, Uncle Sam, who "is rich enough to give us all a farm," through his overscrupulous Secretary of the Treasury, Spinner, denied justice to the postmaster. After many years, when principal and interest amounted to nearly \$100, the congressman from the Vincennes district succeeded in getting a bill for reimbursement before the House to the point of having it printed, and there it stuck. Correspondents all over the country took up the case, and all said a long deferred just bill was about to be paid by the Government, in which opinion they lamentably erred. "Corporations have no souls," it is said, and the only consolation that the then postmaster now has left to him in his declining years is the knowledge of his having stock in the father of all corporations—the United States Government—and he can advisedly say, "this is my Government," if he is but a small junior partner.

The writer's first experience in postage tax, where the amount was paid in money (it being prior to the time of stamps), and according to the distance the letter was carried, when under 600 miles, and near that, it was twenty-five cents per half ounce. Not having sent letters a distance exceeding 600 miles, the highest cost to him was that sum from Kentucky to Missouri. What a drop in postage, from twenty-five cents for 600 miles, to five cents from San Francisco to Europe, a distance of at least 6,000 miles! Penny postage is the next step in postal progression.





VINCENNES UNIVERSITY, FOUNDED IN 1806, AND ANNEX.

C. D. GREEN - VINCENNES



## Chapter V.

### SCHOOLS—VINCENNES UNIVERSITY.

VINCENNES, being one of the first settled towns in the West, early became an important base for military operations, and especially during the close of the eighteenth century. The United States Government, having permanently possessed this region through the foresight and brilliant strategy of General George Rogers Clark, in 1779, it soon became the seat of the Territorial Government, whose jurisdiction embraced much of the Northwest, including Illinois and Michigan. The influx of population, following the organization of a Territorial Government, at this point, especially of the enterprising educated class of people, brought it into such prominence that the establishment of a seat of learning was soon determined on, and Congress was petitioned to, and did, on March 4, 1804, set apart one entire township of land for the benefit of a seminary of learning in the Vincennes land district, and the Secretary of the United States Treasury, on October 10, 1806, selected and set apart Township No. 2, south range eleven west, situated in Gibson county. In pursuance thereof, and to carry out the intention of Congress, the Territorial Legislature of Indiana passed an act November 29, 1806, and supplemented the same by an act passed September 17, 1807, incorporating the Vincennes University in the name and style of "Board of Trustees for the

Vincennes University," and recognized it as the recipient and beneficiary of the aforesaid gift of lands donated by Congress. This act of the Territorial Council and House of Representatives ordained, "that an university be and is hereby instituted and incorporated, within this territory, to be called and known by the name and style of the Vincennes University, and that Wm. Henry Harrison, John Gibson, Thomas M. Davis, Henry Vanderburgh, Waller Taylor, Benjamin Parke, Peter Jones, Samuel Johnson, John Badollet, John Rice Jones, Geo. Wallace, William Bullitt, Elias McNamee, Henry Hurst, Geo. Johnson, Francis Vigo, Jacob Kuykendall, Samuel McKee, Nathaniel Ewing, Geo. Leach, Luke Decker, and Samuel Gwathmey are hereby declared to be the trustees of said University, and the said trustees and their successors be, and they are hereby created, a body corporate and politic by the name of the Board of Trustees for the Vincennes University, and are hereby ordained, established, and declared to be forever hereafter a body politic and corporate in fact and in name and by that name they, and their successors, shall and may have continual succession and shall be persons in law capable of suing and being sued, pleading and being impleaded, answering and being answered, defending and being defended in all courts and places whatever, and that they and their successors may have a common seal and make and alter the same at their pleasure, also that the said trustees shall not at any time hold or possess more than 100,000 acres of land." This act emphasized the broad and liberal heartiness with which the Legislature entered into and sanctioned the idea of Congress in its aim to build up at Vincennes a great educa-

tional institution. The general Government having passed an act to give a second township of land for the same purpose (locating it in Monroe county), the Indiana Legislature evidently intended, at that time, to apply the proceeds of this second township of land to the upbuilding of the Vincennes University, as evidenced by the provisions in the act restricting the institution from acquiring more than 100,000 acres of land. This inference is a clearly legitimate and reasonable one. An additional evidence that the Territorial Legislature intended that this school should be the leading one of the State may be found in the liberal and extensive provisions of its charter. It not only provided for a collegiate course of study, embracing literature and the sciences, but gave it the right to establish chairs of law, medicine and theology; also granting it the right to confer degrees, in the several departments, to students and eminent scholars. It also empowered the board of trustees to establish a grammar school and a female department, also requiring the board to receive into the institution any Indian scholars "who, when sent, shall be maintained, clothed and educated at the expense of said institution." To accomplish this, small donations would have been inadequate, and hence the inevitable conclusion that both townships of land in Gibson and Monroe counties were intended for the use of the Vincennes University. Any other conclusion must presuppose that the members of Congress and the Legislature knew but little of the expensive requirements of such an institution, which was certainly not the case. In the act incorporating the University, under the management of a board of trustees, power was given them by Congress to "sell, transfer, convey and dispose of any



quantity not exceeding 4,000 acres of said land," which they proceeded to do, by sale and lease, after the organization of the board of trustees, which elected Governor William Henry Harrison, president; James Johnson, treasurer, and General W. Johnson, clerk, after which appropriate committees were appointed to carry out the intentions of Congress and the Legislature by the establishment of a University. The committee on building selected two parcels of land, adjoining, from Henry Vanderburgh and Colonel Francis Vigo, forming nearly four squares, and being bounded by Perry, Sixth, Hart and Fourth streets, the finest and most suitable locality in the borough for the college ground. At this early period building material was scarce and expensive, contractors were few and the revenue from the lands slow in being realized; which facts greatly handicapped the trustees in their action. It was not until April 10, 1811, that the large two-story brick building, located in the center of the plot of ground, was tenantable and available for school purposes, when the Reverend Samuel T. Scott, a Presbyterian minister, was selected to open and take charge of an English school therein. The small revenue from the sale of the lands, having been consumed in the purchase of ground and the erection of the building, and more funds being needed to finish and equip the school, as well as to pay teachers, the board petitioned Congress, April 16, 1816, to permit it to sell the remaining 19,000 acres of the Gibson county lands, but the committee to whom the matter was referred reported adversely, saying "it is inexpedient to sell at this time." In 1818 the trustees repeticioned Congress for permission to sell the lands at not less than \$10 per acre (as they

needed the funds to build up the school) at public auction, but the petition was rejected. Although hampered by lack of funds the school was making fair progress, its trustees and friends being buoyed up with the hope and expectation that at no distant day they would realize from the renting of its lands a sufficient endowment fund to meet the expenses incident to its growth and increased educational necessities. But, with the passing years and the increase in population in the eastern and northern parts of the State, a jealousy sprang up from these sections against the southern portion of the State which was soon manifested by legislative action against the Vincennes University, the same influences acting that caused the removal of the seat of government of the Territory from Vincennes to Corydon. On the 20th day of January, 1820, Bloomington College was given a charter, and, quickly following this action, on the 23d of January, 1820, the Legislature, assuming that the State, in its organized capacity, owned the Vincennes University lands, donated to the University by special act of Congress, passed an act appointing commissioners to take possession of said lands and rent them and turn the proceeds into the State Treasury. Thus it occurred, without a vestige of legal right, equity or law, that the remaining 19,000 acres of unsold land of the University were wrested from the trustees by force, under the claim of State inheritance. But it will be seen that the solons had some qualms of conscience about this high-handed procedure of appropriating these lands, for they took steps to give the State the semblance of a title to them through an attempt, by legislation, to obliterate the University from existence. In order to accomplish this

purpose, in 1824 an act was passed attempting to transform the University into a new creature under the name and style of the "Knox County Seminary." By this act Vincennes University was deprived of its lands, building, apparatus, furniture, and even its book of record. By this unjust procedure the University was compelled to give up all its possessions and be transformed into an institution entirely foreign to the kind contemplated by Congress, and thus, for the time being, the Vincennes University, on April 24, 1824, passed under the baleful shadow of wrong and injustice. In this metamorphosis into the "Knox County Seminary" it was stipulated by the Legislature that the institution should be under the control of the old board of trustees of the University; but they paid little attention to the mandate, and an inter-regnum of four years exists between the enactment of this law, attempting to disfranchise the University, and the first meeting of the Knox County Seminary trustees, which occurred October 3, 1828. The blow dealt the University in 1824 gave Vincennes educators a backset, and they did not take kindly to the new institution. The power, privileges and responsibilities having been taken from the old board of trustees, they ceased to be active in educational matters, and the new board (which did not meet until 1828, four years after dispossessing the old board) acted with very little spirit. In this connection it would be well to state, for a full understanding of the conditions existing, that there appears to have been a dual board of trustees, as will be evidenced later, the old board continuing its existence, although there are no continuous records to show the fact, their record-book having been taken by the new board. In the mean-



time, during this hiatus, the school building, having never been completed, was deteriorating for want of care to such an extent that squatters took possession and continued to occupy it at will, filling it up with household goods, using the campus for the pasturage of animals and the basement as a stable for horses. The State, having appropriated the income of the University to Bloomington, said to its Knox County Seminary trustees: "Now, you take possession of the University building and its property and make the Seminary flourish." It gave them nothing to endow it, nor even complete the buildings, yet expected miracles of education to be wrought. To show that the picture is not overdrawn relative to the Knox County Seminary building as rechristened, I quote from its board's record of a meeting held on January 22, 1831. On motion of John Holland, a new trustee, it was "Resolved, That from and after this date, there shall not be allowed any family, person or persons, to occupy any part of the house except those who are engaged in the business of teaching, and the scholars. Neither shall there be allowed any *horse, cow or hog*, or any other *animal* whatsoever, to run at large in said Seminary lot, or be kept in any of the lower rooms, called the cellar, to the injury of the lot or cellar rooms." And from the wording of another resolution offered at the same meeting, one would infer that the building contained a pandemonium where blue, white, black and gray spirits often held high carnival. It reads: "And, be it further Resolved, That a committee of three be appointed whose duty it shall be to visit the Seminary as frequently as the affairs and business of the institution may require, to hear and determine all matters of dispute and to preserve good order

generally in or about the house and preservation of the lot." This condition of the institution was but a natural sequence of ill-advised and unjust legislative action.

"The Knox County Seminary," masquerading in the habiliments of the Vincennes University, maintained a precarious existence during the next few years; its new board of trustees having no heart in the project, held no meetings from October, 1832, until June, 1835, during which year they met but once, and the next and last meeting was held on August 25, 1836, when it ceased to be an active body, although it held control of the Seminary building and grounds. The new board ceasing to be a factor in educational work and the State having failed to extinguish the University, the latter's board resumed the office taken from them in 1824 and reorganized June 11, 1838. The Reverend Alexander was elected president and George R. Gibson secretary. (As they had been robbed of their endowment, they had no use for a treasurer.) Having partially recovered from the embarrassment, as a result of the State's unjust action, the board reasserted itself, and at its first meeting appointed a committee to recover the old records and require the board of trustees of the borough of Vincennes to render an account of the disposition of the funds of the commons land (arising from its sale) above the amount necessary to drain an adjacent pond, authorized by Congress April 20, 1818. At the next meeting of the University board of trustees, October 5, 1839, Honorable A. T. Ellis, a delegate from and in behalf of the "Knox County Seminary" board, appeared and relinquished all claim to the ground and building, thereby acknowledging that his board had no legal right to the property.

During the time the building was in the possession of the Seminary board it deteriorated and debts had accumulated against the property, and he then recommended that the University board of trustees adopt some plan to liquidate the claims against the property and of preventing further dilapidation of the building. Thus it was that the original University board of trustees, after a lapse of fifteen years, resumed control of some of its property which legislative action had deprived it of in 1824. In the interval between the time of dispossession and restoration debts had accumulated against the University to the amount of \$1,830.40, and the assets of the "Knox County Seminary" were nil. After deliberation on the institution's financial condition, it was deemed wise to lease or sell the property to meet the indebtedness. A proposition was received from the president of St. Gabriel's College to purchase, and the same was accepted, and for the sum of \$6,500 the holdings of the University passed into the hands of the Catholics of Vincennes. Upon the receipt of funds, by the sale of the property, the board of trustees took steps to purchase another lot with a view toward erecting a smaller building in which to start a grammar school. In the meantime they rented a brick building near the corner of Fifth and Market (now Main) streets, and secured the services, July, 1840, of the Reverend B. B. Killikelly, an Episcopal minister, to take charge, with Mr. Chestnut as assistant teacher. Lot 191, corner Fifth and Busseron streets, on which the present University building now stands, was purchased of Dr. Hiram Decker for \$500. The Reverend Killikelly remained in charge of the institution until July, 1842, when he tendered his resignation for the purpose of



visiting Europe in the interests of his church and university. During the legislative session of 1843 a bill was passed authorizing the board doing county business in Knox county to seize on all the assets of the University. But it seems that this law proved a dead letter, as no such procedure was attempted or accomplished. The University board entered a protest and engaged legal counsel to defend the institution's rights. Soon after a committee was appointed, May, 1843, to take steps looking to the erection of a school building, but the matter was subsequently abandoned, for the time being, for the want of funds. In the following June the board met and appointed a committee whose duty it was to recover, if possible, the Gibson county lands. Before taking any decisive step the opinion of Chancellor James Kent was sought, and, in December, 1843, the board authorized the Honorable Samuel Judah to collate the facts and laws relating to the right of the University to these lands and send them to Judge Kent for a legal opinion on the same. The chancellor, after examining all the acts of Congress and the Legislature of Indiana on the subject, sent an elaborate and exhaustive opinion in favor of the University's contention, saying, in conclusion: "I am of the opinion that the Legislature of Indiana is bound by the most imperious obligations of justice and honor to indemnify the University for this unconstitutional arrest and detention of their property." Encouraged by such eminent legal authority, as to the rights of the University, the board of trustees authorized Samuel Judah and A. T. Ellis to prosecute its claims to the Gibson county lands, and suits were entered against the occupants. This action created consternation and excitement, as the

holders were innocent purchasers, and a small rebellion was inaugurated and violence was threatened to the attorneys of the University if they persisted in the prosecution of the suits, the only recourse left to the trustees for redress, as they could not sue the State. After some preliminary litigation an understanding was reached between the contesting attorneys, to the effect that the Senators and Representatives from Knox and Gibson counties should secure the passage of an act giving permission to the University board to bring suit against the State in the Marion County Circuit Court to determine the right of ownership of said lands. This bill was passed in 1846, and the board's attorneys were authorized to bring suit at once. The case was tried and the Marion County jury awarded the University \$30,096.66 for that part of the lands the State had already sold. The State appealed the case to the Supreme Court, which reversed this decision at the spring term, 1850. An appeal was then taken to the Supreme Court of the United States by the attorneys for the University, and, in 1852, that court set aside the action of the Indiana Supreme Court, holding that the lands belonged to the University. In the delivery of the opinion of the court, the Chief Justice said: "The claim is a just one, and if the reservations of these lands had been judiciously managed they would have constituted a fund at this time (1852) of \$200,000." After this decision the State of Indiana made another effort to deprive the University of its charter and secured the services of five of the best lawyers in the State to gain its purpose. They attempted to show that the University board of trustees had lost its charter through neglect, but it was found that there was no evidence to

show that the charter "had ever been forfeited by any act or omission of the board," and that the corporation had been in a state of continuity ever since the organization, the University board having been appointed by the Legislature to assume control of the "Knox County Seminary," the succession was maintained unbroken. This last attempt to extinguish the Vincennes University failed. Having forcibly seized the lands, lot, buildings, furniture, apparatus and even its records, so if possible to blot it out of existence; having tried to discourage, demoralize and scatter, by circumstances and death, the members of the board, thus seeking to make a break in the succession, and thereby make void the charter, was an act of unjust procedure.

Baffled in this last effort to destroy the University, the Legislature in 1855 passed an indemnifying act, for the benefit of the University, which was less than one-tenth of its indebtedness.

The Knox County Seminary, having no funds with which to build a schoolhouse, borrowed some of the money arising out of the sale of their building from the University trustees, and erected a house on the latter's lot, mortgaging the property for payment of same. The mortgaged debt maturing, the house was sold, and reverted to the University.

It was in this building the academic department was reinstated in 1856, with the Reverend R. M. Chapman president, since which time the school has been in successful operation. In the same year the trustees bought the lot diagonally across the street (corner Fifth and Busseron), and for \$2,300 erected a building to be used as a female department. This building was conducted successfully for



some time, but several years later the schools were consolidated in the brick building. To resume the line of history of the contention of the University with the State, it was after a half century of enforced litigation by the former, in defense of its rights, its lands and its franchises, causing thereby the expenditure of large sums of money in the way of court and attorneys' fees and the enforced sacrifices of its buildings and grounds, that the Legislature doled out, not what the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States declared was due the Vincennes University, i. e., \$200,000, but State bonds to the amount of \$66,565 for lands already sold. This did not account for 2,200 acres of land unsold (and not accounted for to this day), and was not a tithe of the indebtedness.

After the long and costly fight for its rights it gained a victory of \$41,565, inclusive of the court and attorneys' fees arising out of the original contract. Subtracting the amount of court and attorneys' fees in obtaining the latter settlement, the institution in fact realized not two-thirds of the award. It will be observed that after nearly half a century of contention for the magnificent endowment given by Congress, this small pittance was turned into the treasury of the University, as restitution money. In 1878, having well husbanded the money received from the State, and the school having outgrown its home, it was resolved by the trustees to erect a more modern and commodious building on its ground, the site of the "Knox County Seminary," which would be more suitable to the wants of advanced education. The present beautiful structure was completed in August, 1878, at a total cost of \$14,616. The school prospered and the building was soon found inadequate to ac-

commodate the patronage of additional students. As a result, in 1889, and at a cost of \$4,180, an addition to the south and west end was erected. The War Department, having designated the Vincennes University as one of the institutions where military science might be taught, an officer was detailed for this instruction, and, so successful had this branch proved, that, when war was declared with Spain, in 1898, he had organized a full company of cadets, well drilled and fully equipped to enter into the fight for maintaining the prestige and honor of our country. This was the first volunteer company to offer its services to the Governor of the State, and the only full company of cadets sent by any State institution of learning in the Union to engage in the Spanish War. The company of University cadets formed a part of the 159th Regiment of Indiana Volunteers and was in service for one year, although they were not sent to the front on account of the speedy conclusion of the war. This was the first opportunity the University had to return in any degree the favors shown it by the Government for its magnificent donation in 1806, and the episode will be recorded as one of the brightest in its history.

From time to time the Legislature has been petitioned for redress, but without avail until 1895, when an appropriation was made for \$15,000, for which the State exacted a receipt in full of all demands from the University. As this sum did not pay the debt it was not accepted by the University, as an adequate settlement of the claim, and the Honorable Basil Gaither, Knox County's Representative, entered a formal protest, in behalf of the institution, to giving a receipt in full, and the protest was recorded in the

House Journal of the Fifty-ninth General Assembly. In the Sixtieth General Assembly, 1897, another bill was introduced for an additional sum with a view toward liquidating the State's indebtedness to the University, but the appropriation was defeated by a small majority. With the intention of liquidating the State debt to the University, the Sixty-first General Assembly, in March, 1899, passed a bill authorizing an issue of 4 per cent. bonds for \$120,000, payable in twenty years. This bill was passed by almost a unanimous vote in the Senate, there being only four votes against it. The House passed it by 64 ayes, 29 nays. Through some misinformation, or lack of a full knowledge of the real merit of the claim, Governor James A. Mount failed to sign the bill, and in the closing hours of the session the matter was referred to the next General Assembly, and, at the suggestion of the Governor, the president of the Senate appointed a committee of three to examine into the merits of the claim and report the facts to the next succeeding Legislature.

The committee of the Senate appointed examined the claims of the University during vacation, and reported favorably, and the bill came up again the following session, in March, 1901, and passed the Senate by a vote of 30 to 15. The House committee to which the bill had been referred strangled it, and it was never reported to the House for fear of its passage. Economy in this case usurped the place of justice, which must and will eventually prevail. The indebtedness of the State to the University, when this bill was presented, amounted to \$703,695. It will be seen from the foregoing facts and figures, which can not be successfully controverted, that the great and prosperous State



of Indiana is indebted to its first born educational institution, which it warmed into life, then abandoned, after confiscating its inheritance, and has to the present time held back the dispensing hand of justice, and hesitates to restore its rights upon the score of economy or that the indebtedness is too old to pay. Honesty, truth and right are eternal principles, uninfluenced by time or circumstances, and will perish only with eternity. The University does not ask a donation, but pleads for only partial restoration of what is its due.

The State is not too poor to pay its debts, as it gives more than \$200,000 annually to three institutions of learning; and, during Governor Mount's term of office, Leopold Levy paid immatured bonds to the amount of nearly \$700,000, ignoring for the time an old sacred debt. Governor Mount had a laudable ambition in trying to make his administration an economical one; but if \$120,000 had been deducted from the amount paid bondholders and applied toward liquidating the University debt (as recommended by both the Senate and the House) the sum total of the canceled indebtedness would have been the same as it now stands. The State should be just first, and generous when able to be so.

In 1898, realizing the necessity for more room to accommodate the growing patronage, the trustees purchased the adjoining lot, number 190, facing on Broadway, from A. Gimbel heirs, at a cost of \$7,000, hoping to soon add a wing to the main building which would contain a large room suitable for an armory. Besides providing for more students by this purchase, the grounds are now enlarged to a full half square, surrounded by and ornamented with

beautiful shade trees, most of which were planted in 1856.

Since the above was written the old Decker property has been acquired by the University, giving it still larger grounds for its use, for the sum of \$4,350. All that is now lacking to have the Vincennes University enlarged and thoroughly equipped is the payment by the great and rich commonwealth of Indiana of its just and long-deferred dues. The University will then assert its power, and, with dignity, can take up its line of march abreast of the age, in all the branches of literature and art that beautify and enrich our civilization and our State. By such payment the State will have lifted from its shoulders a debt almost criminal in its effects, and enjoy the sweet peace of conscience in the act of having performed a long-delayed duty to the first established educational institution in the West; and where our country's flag was first planted and, unfurling, was first kissed by the glowing lips of American Liberty.

The University, although entitled by its charter to confer degrees on its graduates and persons who have distinguished themselves in the field of literature, has been chary in the exercise of this right, and up to this time only two honorary degrees have been conferred; the first of D. D., in 1842, upon one of its former presidents, the Reverend Killikelly, and the other, LL. D., in 1857, upon a former professor in the institution, the Reverend W. H. Carter. It still withheld printed recognition from its own pupils until 1874, when four students, having completed successfully the course of study allotted to them, received diplomas as evidence of their scholarship, and since that time

the custom of giving diplomas has obtained. It has advanced its standard of scholarship, as its funds would permit the employment of qualified teachers, and in 1884 the board of trustees decided that no grade of instruction below the academic would be embraced in its curriculum of study. As a result of this course, and thorough equipment, when the pupils receive their diplomas in the classic or scientific departments they are prepared to and do enter, without examination, any Western college as a junior. With the expectation of increased facilities, the University will soon be able to throw off the last of the shackles which have impeded its progress, and take rank with its more fortunate sisters, who have not had to walk through the valley and the shadow of death. It will then become what Congress and the Territorial Legislature intended it should be when its patrimony and charter were given, a university in the fullest meaning of the word. In closing this sketch of the Vincennes University much credit is due—more than they ever will receive—to the competent, faithful, indefatigable men who have ever formed the board of trustees.

In their long line of march, covering a period of ninety-six years, as one would fall along the way, by the stroke of time or circumstances, another volunteer would take his place. This with the knowledge that his only remuneration would be the consciousness of having performed his duty in aiding the advancement of education and civilization, the beneficiaries being the young of the passing and future generations. During all these years, amid all the vicissitudes through which the institution has passed, no treasurer has defaulted to the amount of a single penny, and the



funds have been husbanded in the most businesslike manner. Time and talents have been lavished on the institution which would have brought to acting members of the board thousands of dollars if employed in business engagements. Some of the most distinguished men in national affairs have been on the roll of honor of the University's board of trustees. On that roll will be found the names of one President of the United States, several members of Congress, celebrated jurists, judges, clergymen, officials of the United States Government, authors, physicians, bankers, merchants, editors, mechanics and capitalists—men from all walks of life who have kept in close touch with the people in the progress of science, art and literature. Neither would this sketch be complete without according a place of honor to the long roll of distinguished men of learning who have graced and filled so well the office of president of the University, from its foundation to this year of grace 1902. In this list there could be named many distinguished divines and professors of science and literature, who have, since leaving the institution, filled and are now occupying professorships in many colleges.

In the interests of the present generation and prosperity, and as no attempt has as yet been made to preserve many facts unknown to the general public and which soon would be lost in the flight of the passing years, I have assumed the task, in connection with this sketch, to record statistics relating thereto. I believe them to be practically correct, although some omission may have accidentally occurred, owing to imperfect records in the misty past.

## PRESIDENTS.

Names of the presidents of Vincennes University and the time of their inauguration :

- 1811. Reverend Samuel T. Scott.
- 1815. Professor Jesse Olds.
- 1818. Professor Jean Jean.
- 1823. Reverend Henry Shaw.
- 1840. Reverend B. B. Killikelly, D. D.
- 1845. Reverend Geo. B. Jocelyn.
- 1850. Professor Matthews, A. M.
- 1855. Reverend R. M. Chapman, D. D.
- 1867. Reverend O. C. Drake, A. M.
- 1868. Professor James M. Naylor, A. M.
- 1870. Reverend Geo. Parrott, A. M.
- 1872. Professor Louis Prugh, A. M.
- 1881. Professor E. A. Haight.
- 1882. Professor Pitt L. McCreary.
- 1883. Professor Enoch A. Bryan, A. M.
- 1893. Professor Edward P. Cubberly, A. M.
- 1896. Professor A. H. Yoder, A. M.
- 1900. Professor W. H. Hershman, A. M.
- 1902. Professor James E. Manchester, B.S., D.Sc.

Officers of the board of trustees of the Vincennes University from its foundation, December 6, 1806, to December, 1902, and when elected:

- 1806. General William Henry Harrison, President.
- 1806. General George W. Johnson, Secretary.
- 1806. James Johnson, Treasurer.

- 1811. Benjamin Parke, President.
- 1813. Reverend Samuel Scott, Treasurer.
- 1812. George Gibson, Secretary.
- 1838. A. T. Ellis, President.
- 1838. Reverend Thomas Alexander, President.
- 1839. Samuel Hill, President.
- 1820. Moses Tabbs, President.
- 1838. Samuel Judah, Secretary.
- 1839. William Burtch, Treasurer.
- 1853. Isaac Mass, Treasurer.
- 1850. Doctor John R. Mantle, President.
- 1841. Doctor W. W. Hitt, President.
- 1853. George D. Hay, Secretary.
- 1855. Doctor Joseph Somes, Secretary.
- 1864. Harrison T. Roseman, Secretary.
- 1865. Doctor J. H. Rabb, Treasurer.
- 1855. William Burtch, reëlected Treasurer.
- 1867. Doctor R. G. Moore, President.
- 1878. Smiley N. Chambers, Secretary.
- 1889. W. B. Robinson, Secretary.
- 1888. J. L. Bayard, Treasurer.
- 1897. Hubbard M. Smith, President.

Present Corps of Teachers:

James Eugene Manchester, B. S. ,D. Sc. (Tuebingen); President and Professor of Mathematics.

Oscar M. Duncan, B. S., A. M., Professor of Natural Science.

Thomas J. Davis, A. B., Professor of English.

Charles H. McLawry, A. B., A. M., Professor of Greek and Latin.



Margaret Manchester, Professor of Modern Languages.

N. K. Flint, Principal Business Department.

Cecelia Ray Berry, Director of Music.

Ida Margaret Berry, Principal Vocal Department.

Board of Trustees: Hubbard M. Smith, M. D., President; W. B. Robinson, Attorney-at-Law, Secretary; J. L. Bayard, President First National Bank, Treasurer; Walter M. Hindman, Dental Surgeon; Edward H. Smith, hardware; W. C. Johnson, Attorney-at-Law; Judge Ray Gardner, Washington, Ind.; James W. Emison, Attorney-at-Law; Charles Bierhaus, wholesale grocer; S. N. Chambers, Ex-United States Attorney, Indianapolis; H. A. Foulks, Esq.; T. H. Adams, Editor *Commercial* and Postmaster; Royal E. Purcell, Editor *Sun*; Major W. P. Gould, Paymaster United States Army.

#### ST. GABRIEL'S COLLEGE.

St. Gabriel's College was established in 1837, by the Reverend John August Vabret, who brought with him to this town a colony from Rennes, France, called Eudists. He purchased the University of Vincennes property in 1839 and used the building as his school. He was succeeded as president by the Reverend John P. Bellier, in 1840. The school was maintained until 1845, when it was closed by an order from the Superior-General of the Eudists. The building was then occupied as an orphan asylum, and, afterward, by St. Rose Academy of Providence, under the management of Sister Cyrilla, until it was replaced by the present fine and commodious building, accommodat-

ing 275 pupils. St. Vincent Orphan Asylum being built two and a half miles south of the city, the orphans were transferred to it, and one hundred are domiciled there, under Sister M. Carmel, a Sister of Providence. St. Vincent Orphan Asylum was built first in 1847. It was used at first as a diocesan seminary for boys, but it is now used also as an asylum for boys, since the erection of the present fine building, which was built in 1864. It contains a chapel and is served by a pastor.

St. Ann's Orphan Asylum for Girls was situated near the cathedral. In 1849 it was removed to Terre Haute.

In addition to the schools noted, one is connected with St. Xavier's Church, with one lay teacher and two Sisters of Providence, and embraces 250 pupils; and another parochial school connected with St. John the Baptist Church, under the supervision of Reverend Meinrad Fleischman, and four Sisters of Providence, by whom 215 pupils are taught.

#### COMMON SCHOOLS.

The common school system may be said to have been inaugurated in Vincennes not before 1850, and then only in a feeble manner. The sentiment of the State before this period was against laws levying a tax for the support of free schools. When the present Constitution of the State was adopted, the right to inaugurate the common school system was acquiesced in by the people generally and soon efficient free school laws were enacted, and then public schools were established all over the State. The Legislature, in 1824, made an attempt to blot out of existence

the Vincennes University, the first educational institution established in this State, through and by its Territorial Legislature, endowed by Congress with one or more townships of land, by the establishment of a free school in this county under the title of the "Knox County Seminary." But as it appropriated the proceeds of the sale of the University lands to establish Bloomington College, the effort proved an utter failure, and the "Knox County Seminary" died of inanition, the Legislature having failed to provide for the school's support. Hence for nearly a half century, and not until the State grudgingly had been compelled, after long and expensive legislation, to make a partial restitution to the University, was there an effective revival of education in this town.

In 1853 the public school system was fully inaugurated here by and through the trustees elected by the people, composed of George D. Hay, John W. Canon and Lambert Burrois. For lack of funds the schools were inefficient, and even in 1855 only three months' tuition was vouchsafed to the pupils. In 1857 the duration of the school year was extended to five months, with Anson W. Jones as principal, at a salary of only \$50 per month. In 1860 the first school building was erected (now known as the Central School) at the corner of Buntin and Seventh streets, at a cost of \$19,000, under the supervision of Trustees John D. Lander, William Williamson and G. H. Deusterberg. Professor A. W. Jones was elected superintendent, succeeding himself in 1863, and retaining this position until his death in 1873. This building has for its principal at the present writing, M. R. Kirk, with nine assistants. Another building was erected on the south side of this city in 1878.



E. A. Quigie is now principal, with three assistants. The third building was erected on the north side in 1885, and is now conducted by Miss Josephine Crotts, as principal, with five assistants. The building on the east side was erected in 1891, and is now conducted by Miss Melvina Keith, as principal, and four assistants. The present High School building was erected in 1897, at a cost of \$30,000, on the corner of Buntin and Fifth streets, and is a beautiful modern structure. All of the buildings are of brick, substantial, commodious, well equipped and furnished.

To the Central School there is attached a kindergarten department which is conducted by Miss Caroline Pelham with Mrs. Flora Andrus Curtis as assistant.

The building for colored pupils was erected about thirty years ago, on the corner of Thirteenth and Hart streets, with B. L. Anthony as principal, and two assistants as present instructors. The enrollment of pupils in the public schools of this city in the last report was 1,900.

The High School has a faculty of ten teachers, including Professor E. A. Humpke, the present superintendent.

The epithet applied to this region by Provisional Governor Arthur Sinclair, of the Northwest Territory, in his first report to the United States Congress in 1780, to wit, "The Wabash Valley has the most ignorant people on earth, and not a fiftieth man can read or write", has long since ceased to have any foundation in truth. When this expression was uttered, only one year had elapsed after the Wabash Valley had passed from the hands of Great Britain into those of Uncle Sam, and but few white persons, except soldiers, occupied it. The schoolmaster has been abroad in the land and the Vincennes University

did much in the early part of the last century to dispel the clouds of ignorance that had brooded over the Wabash Valley from time immemorial, and to make this place the radiating center whence the first streams of knowledge flowed over the great Northwest.

The common schools of Indiana, the sequence of advanced education, are now the pride, not only of the State, but of the Nation, and illiteracy is the exception and not the rule. Could good old Governor Sinclair but awaken from his Rip Van Winkle slumbers and view our colleges and white school houses, which dot hill and valley like the cattle on a thousand hills, he would be astounded and constrained to exclaim, "Great is Hoosierdom; and her knowledge enlighteneth as the rays of the morning sun." Indiana claims to have the largest common school fund of any State in the Union, and possibly has, with the single exception of the State of Texas, which, upon its admission to the sisterhood of States, retained all her public domain for the use and maintenance of her public free schools.



## Chapter VI.

### CHURCHES—CATHOLIC.

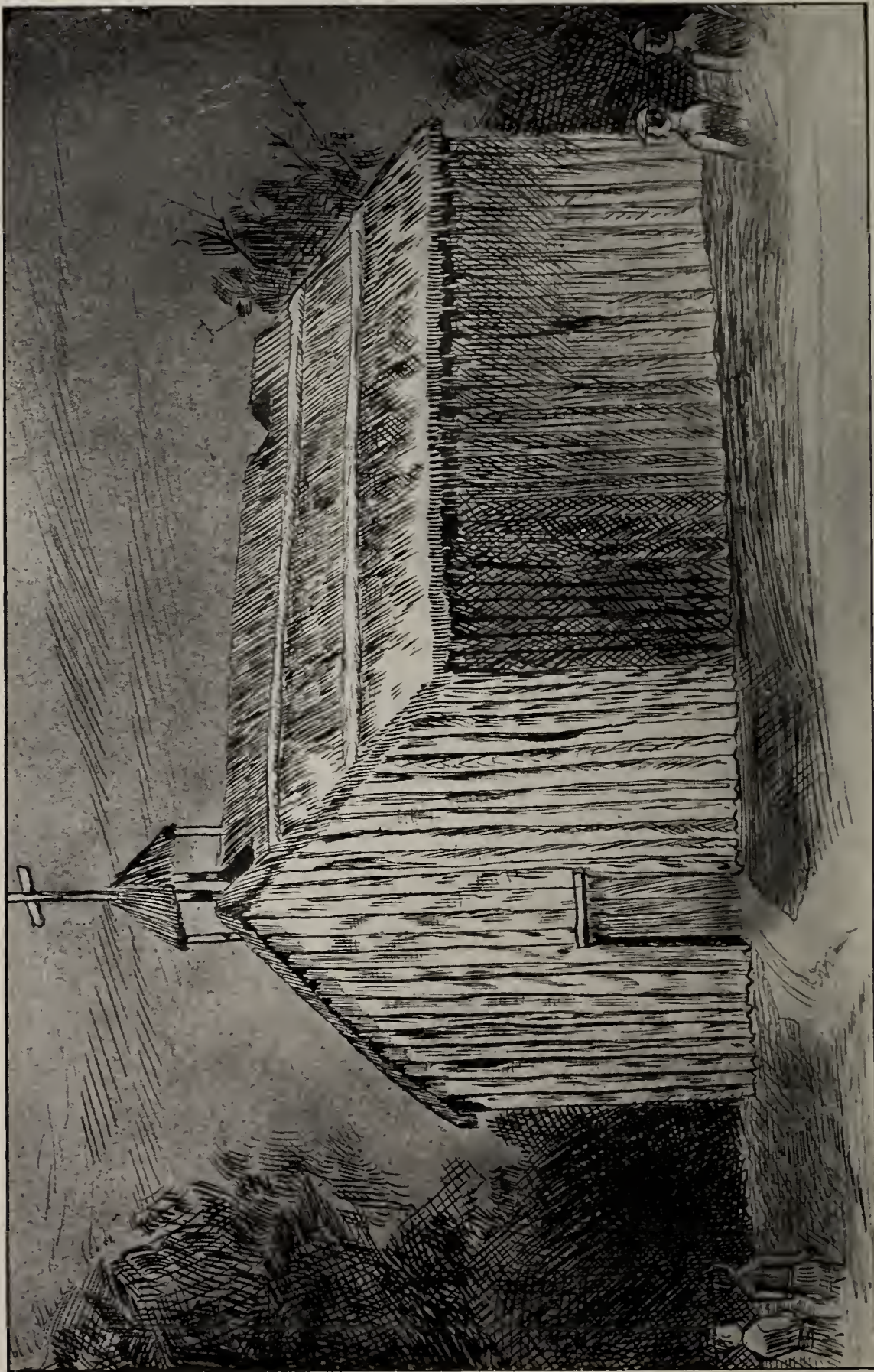
**T**O THE CATHOLICS belong the honor of doing the first Christian missionary work in Indiana, at the Piankeshaw village, the site of the city of Vincennes, and the erection of the first house of worship dedicated to God.

It has been said that a Jesuit missionary Father visited the Indian village Che-pe-ko-ke, on the Wabash river, as early as 1702, but it has been shown in discussing the early settlement of this place that this statement is incorrect, and the mistake arose from an inaccuracy of some of the earlier explorers of the Mississippi Valley. For a long time the Ohio and Wabash rivers were confounded, they believing the former emptied into the latter, hence the name Ouabache was used for the Ohio. It is not probable that a mission was established here very much earlier than the advent of Morgan de Vincennes in 1731 or 1732. From that time on a priest was here occasionally until a church organization was effected and a house of worship erected, about the year 1749, the resident priest being the Reverend Louis Meurin. The first entry in the church records is dated April 21, 1749,\* and embraces the following marriage certificate: "Julian Trotier, of Montreal, Canada, and Josie Marie, the daughter of a Frenchman and Indian woman." His last record was made in 1756.

---

\* Law's Hist. Vincennes, p. 145. W. H. Smith's Hist. Ind., p. 255.





FIRST ST. FRANCIS XAVIER CHURCH, ERECTED ABOUT 1749.



“In a memorial on the affairs of Louisiana by M. Le Bailey Messenger, dated December 17, 1749, a proposition was made to establish a ‘central power on the Wabash.’ In the early part of the same year, 1749, a mission or church was established at Post Vincennes by the missionary Sebast. Lud. Meurin.”\* On quitting the Post he left one Phillibert, a notary public, in charge, to keep the records and to administer baptism to laymen privately during the absence of a priest. The records of the Catholic church here make no mention of the missionaries until the year 1749, when Father Meurin came here. For more than half a century this was the only church in Indiana.† From the departure of Reverend Louis L. Meurin there seems to have been no priest at Vincennes until the arrival of Reverend Pierre Gibault, who, upon his ordination in Canada, had been sent to the “Illinois Country,” his objective point being Kaskaskia, as Vicar-General, by the Bishop of Quebec. In the line of his duty Reverend Gibault visited Vincennes first, in February, 1770. “In March he returned to Kaskaskia, the usual place of his residence, but for several years continued to pay occasional visits to the Post. He was for a time the only priest in Indiana. We find from the records of the church that in July, 1778, he was in Vincennes, exerting himself successfully in inducing the French inhabitants to declare in favor of the United States against Great Britain.”‡ His mission here at this time was, in some degree, as ambassador of Colonel George Rogers Clark, who had won over

---

\* “In 1749 a church or mission was established under the charge of Missionary Meurin at Piankeshaw village, which stood at the site of Vincennes.”—Dillon Hist., p. 403.

† W. H. Smith’s Hist. Ind., p. 255.

‡ Law’s Hist. Vincennes, p. 146.

the Father to the American cause, after his capture of Kaskaskia. His services were invaluable, and he should be held in grateful remembrance by all American citizens.

The English Government being in full possession of the Northwest Territory at that time, with the exception of Kaskaskia and Cahokia, Father Gibault, in showing sympathy with and giving active aid to Colonel Clark's army, showed rare patriotism to the cause of liberty in thus exposing himself to the risk of capture and trial for treason by the English. His good services prepared the way for Clark's successful attack and capture of the town and fort at Vincennes, February 25, 1779. "In July, 1779, Father Gibault again visited Vincennes, then in the possession of the Americans. He remained three weeks, discharging the duties of his office. Five years elapsed, after this, without a visit from a priest, when Gibault reappeared in 1784, accompanied by the Reverend M. Payet. In May, 1785, he established himself at the Post as the resident pastor. He remained here until October, 1789, when he finally left and settled at Cahokia, and afterwards at New Madrid, Missouri, where he died in 1804. A layman, Pierre Mallet, acted as guardian of the church, having been thus appointed by M. Gibault, until the arrival of M. Flaget, in 1792."\* It is said by the same author that he remained at this Post two years.

As to the location and character of the first church building, I will quote from the history of the late Honorable John Law, a very intelligent gentleman, who came to Vincennes in the year 1817, and who had access to the church library and was well qualified to make a true state-

---

\* Law's Hist. Vincennes, p. 147.



ment on the subject. The first building was doubtless erected during the pastorate of Father Louis L. Meurin about the year 1749, as before stated, as the records of the church then begin to be kept. Law says: "It is not beyond the memory of the oldest inhabitant of the Post—indeed, it is within the recollection of all who dwelt here forty years since—that fronting on Water street, running back to Church street, toward the present cathedral, there was a plain building with a rough exterior, built of upright posts, 'chuncked and daubed', to use an architectural expression purely western, with a rough coat of cement on the outside; in width about twenty feet; in length about sixty feet; one story high, with a small belfry, and an equally small bell, now used at the more elegant and symmetrical building \* \* \*. The building I have described—placed in the cemetery, where the various mortuary memorials, which piety and affection had dedicated to those who had gone before, headed with the symbol of their faith, and for the most part of wood, the inscriptions, from moss and time almost illegible—was the ancient church of St. Francis Xavier \* \* \* and was without doubt the only church used here for Catholic worship until the foundations of the new edifice which has superseded it was laid and the building prepared for worship."\*

The History of Knox County, p. 289, has this to say: "Father Gibault says, in 1784, a new church had been built, 90x42 feet." This statement is not borne out by the facts, and it is presumed that the Father has been misrepresented. If such a building had been erected upon the Father's advent the last time he came, in May, 1785, where

---

\* Law's Hist. Vincennes, p. 141.

was it in 1792, when Father B. J. Flaget came to serve the church? He said: "The building was poor, open and neglected; the altar, a temporary structure, was of boards and badly put together. I found the congregation in a worse state even than the church. Out of nearly 700, but twelve could be induced to approach holy communion during Christmas festivities."\* If a new church had been built in 1784, as alleged, it is not probable that it could have become so dilapidated as described by the reverend Father, in only a few years' time; and the size of the reputed new building, 90x42 feet, does not correspond with the one described by Law, 20x60 feet, and "one story high," when he came to Vincennes in 1817. What Father Flaget said in 1792 about the building goes to show that it was the same as originally constructed, but possibly improved somewhat by St. Ange, who added a belfry and a bell, which was used in church service until the erection of the new cathedral, and, for some purpose, up to the present time."†

There is a living witness to corroborate Judge Law's statement, Mrs. Elizabeth Andre, now in her ninety-third year. She told the writer, May 7, 1902, that she, in company with the late L. L. Watson and Mr. Vital Bouchie, now living, took their first communion in the first church built here, and describes it as built of posts or upright slabs, and further stated that this old church was used up to the time of the erection of the present cathedral. She describes the entrance to the church as facing the river; said that sometimes there were long intervals between the visits of the priests; that she remembers when two came,

---

\* Hist. Knox County, p. 236.

† Law's Hist. Vincennes, p. 15.

having walked and carried their packs on their backs a long distance; and remembers Father Flaget as the first bishop to come to Vincennes. She seems bright in intellect and memory as ever, and says that her recollection of incidents in her early years is as clear as it ever was—much better than it is of incidents happening fifty years ago. The foregoing statements indicate definitely that the present cathedral has had but one preceding church.

There was no regular supply of the church here until Congress, at the petition of Bishop Carroll indorsed by President Washington, passed an act giving an annuity to the church of \$200. Then the Bishop appointed Reverend John Francis Rivet, who arrived here in May, 1795. His first official act recorded was the baptism of Antoinette Rous, May 3, 1795, when he signed the record "Rivet prete missionary." He continued here until 1804. Then there appears to have been no regularly stationed priest here for about a period of about two years. Those who officiated remained here but a short time and were attached to missions in Illinois, or to the diocese of Kentucky. M. Flaget, having been consecrated Bishop of Bardstown, Ky., revisited Vincennes in 1814, and again in 1819, 1823 and 1832 \* \* \*. He was the first bishop who served at Vincennes. He died in Louisville in February, 1850. The See of Vincennes was erected in 1833 and Reverend Simon G. Brute was consecrated October 28, 1834, at St. Louis, and took up his residence at Vincennes.\* As his field of labor was very extensive and his flocks scattered over a vast extent of territory, there being only two priests under his jurisdiction, and they two hundred and twenty-five miles

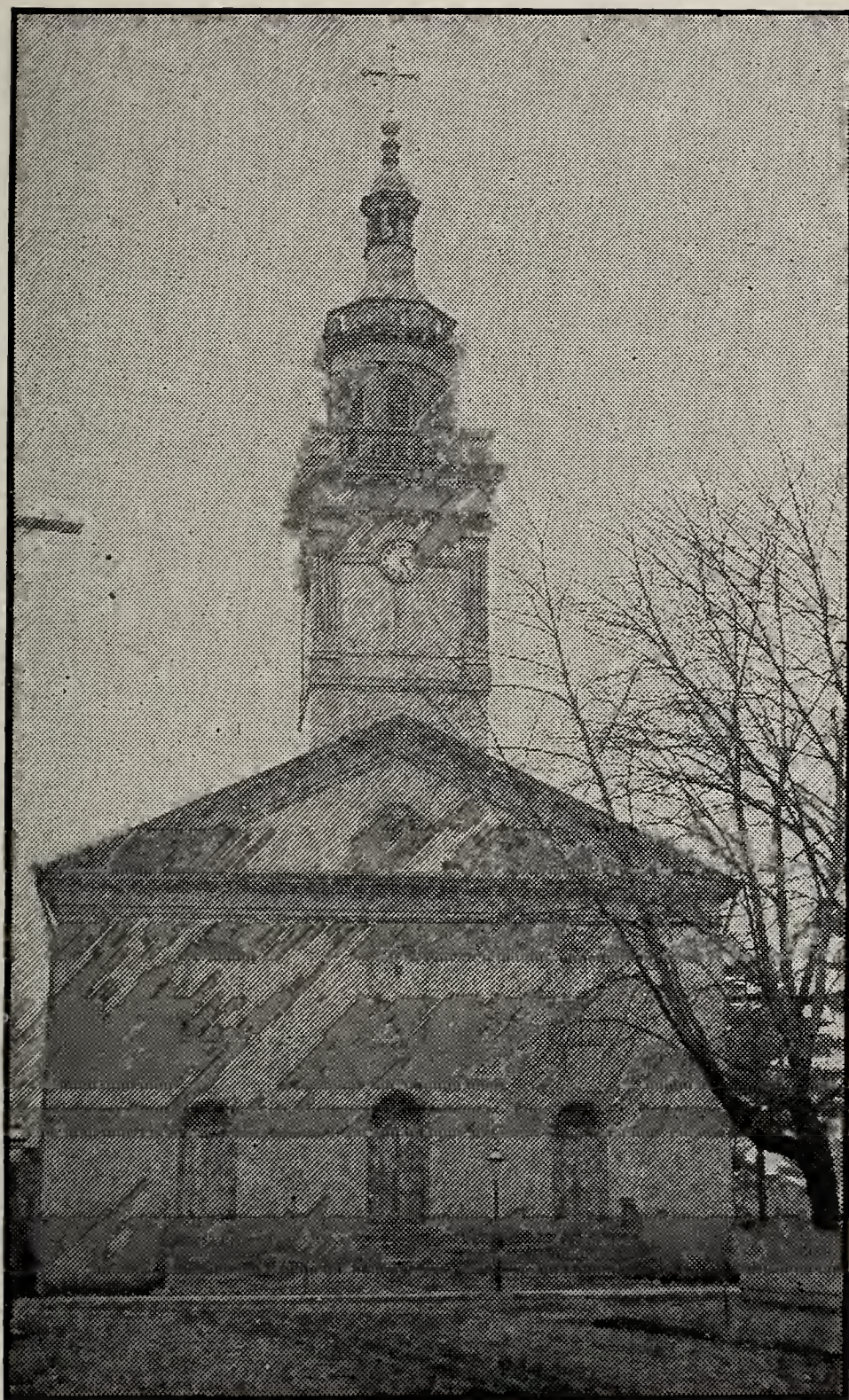
---

\* Hist. Knox County, p. 291.



apart, he addressed his first pastoral letter from St. Louis after his elevation, that being the only way he could reach his members. He died in 1839, leaving a distinguished record as a Christian gentleman and a popular bishop, and was buried in the crypt of the church. Bishop Brute was succeeded by Bishop Celestin Reno Laureant Gyner de le Hailandiere, in 1839, who resigned in 1847. He was succeeded by John Stephen Bazin in 1847, who died April 23, 1848, after a brief episcopate of six months. Bishop Isaac Maurice de Long d'Assac de St. Palais was appointed to this diocese in 1849. It then comprised the whole State, including about fifty churches and a Catholic population of about 30,000. Bishop St. Palais was an efficient and popular bishop. During his episcopate the diocese was divided, and one at Fort Wayne erected, embracing about one-half of the State. He died in 1877. Francis Silas Chatard, the fifth bishop, succeeded to this diocese and was consecrated bishop in Rome, May, 1878, by Cardinal Franchi. Up to this time the bishop's residence had been at Vincennes and his parishoners here were much concerned to know whether the new bishop would continue it or not. As this had been the battleground for the success and advancement of the church for more than a century and a half, they felt a just pride in claiming priority of domicile for their bishop and had good reasons for supposing that this city would become his home. But such was not to be, and sacred ties, consecrated by sweet memories of the past, were to be rent asunder for public policy through the inexorable changes of time and progress. He was installed in office by Archbishop Purcell, of Cincinnati, in August, 1878. The brief changing the





SECOND ST. FRANCIS XAVIER CHURCH. ERECTED IN 1826; FINISHED 1834.



style of the diocese from Vincennes to Indianapolis was dated March 28, 1878, but was not promulgated until April 20, 1898. The news of the change was received with grief by his parishoners here, but was loyally accepted by them.

St. Xavier Cathedral has for its rector the Reverend Louis Gueguen, R. D., a most estimable gentleman and Christian, and the Reverend Frederick Berget, an eloquent young preacher, as his assistant.

St. John's German Catholic Church, a branch of St. Xavier, was constituted in 1851, and had for its pastor Reverend Nicholas Stauber, who erected a brick house for worship in the same year on a beautiful square between Eighth and Ninth streets, on Main, the same in recent years being remodeled and enlarged under the supervision of the second pastor, Reverend A. Mertz, who faithfully administered unto his parishoners for more than forty years and up to his death. Reverend Meinrad Fleischman, the present pastor, succeeded him.

The prosperity and status of the Catholic Church may be judged by the following statistics gleaned from the reports of its official records for the year 1900, of the Church in the State: Bishops, 2; priests, 353; churches, 302; Catholic population, 184,388.

#### PRESBYTERIAN.

The first missionary work done in this State by the Presbyterian Church occurred in the years 1804, 1805 and 1806, by the Reverends Samuel Runnels, Samuel D. Robinson, James McGrady and Thomas Clelland, members of the Transylvania Presbytery of Kentucky. In 1805 the





PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, ORGANIZED 1806.

Reverend Clelland visited Vincennes and Governor William Henry Harrison's wife, who was a Presbyterian, invited him to preach in the council chamber of the Governor, which he did; and this is the first recorded sermon preached in Indiana Territory by a Presbyterian minister.

The first church was organized (under the title of The Indiana Church) in 1806, by the Reverend Samuel D. Robinson, of the Transylvania Presbytery, Synod of Kentucky. Missionaries, besides the ones noted, occasionally visited Indiana Territory, including Reverend Thomas Williamson, of the Presbytery of South Carolina, but there was no regular pastor stationed here until 1807, when the General Assembly of the church "ordered that the Reverend Samuel T. Scott, of the Presbytery of West Lexington, Ky., be a missionary for three months in the Indiana Territory, and especially at Vincennes." The Reverend Scott had been serving as pastor of Mt. Pleasant and Indian Creek churches. He arrived under this resolution of the Assembly in 1807, and became pastor of Indiana Church,\* which was the first Presbyterian Church organized in Indiana Territory. The Reverend Scott proved to be an efficient and laborious pastor, meetings being held in the woods oftentimes. He soon gathered three congregations, known as Upper and Lower Indiana and Vincennes portions of the Indiana Church. He was prime factor in educational advancement in this region and was the first teacher employed by the Vincennes University trustees. The impress left on the people by him was elevating and enlightening to the cause of civilization and the Christian religion. He ministered to these congregations many years

---

\*Indiana Church embraced the churches of Vincennes, Upper and Lower Indiana.



before he was ordained, that event occurring August 6, 1825, at a meeting of the Salem Presbytery (this body having been organized and detached from the Synod of Kentucky in 1823), in the courthouse in Vincennes. This body consisted of the Reverends William Robinson, John Todd, Samuel T. Scott, William W. Martin, John M. Dickey, John T. Crowe and Isaac Reed. Reverend Samuel Scott died in 1827, and the Reverend Samuel R. Alexander succeeded to the pastorate of the church in 1828, being installed in the old court house standing at the corner of Third and Buntin streets. Up to 1833 the Vincennes Church was identified with and was a part of Indiana Church, organized in 1806; but after that time it assumed an individual existence. The other churches issuing from Indiana Church, the parent church, were Wheatland, Bruceville, West Salem, Smyrna, Upper and Lower Indiana Churches.

The first building of the Vincennes branch as organized\* stood on the corner of Fifth and Busseron streets, on which the present Presbyterian Church now stands and was dedicated April 16, 1831, with Reverend Samuel R. Alexander as supply to it and the other churches up to January 6, 1833, when the Reverend W. W. Martin became pastor, with a membership of thirty-three persons. He preached until April, 1835, when he was succeeded by Reverend John McNeil, who was succeeded by the Reverend Thomas Alexander, who remained until January 23, 1847. Reverend John F. Smith was then pastor until May, 1858. Reverend J. W. Blythe succeeded him, who gave way to Reverend J. F. Jennison, and he in turn to Eli B. Smith

---

\* The lot was conveyed to the trustees of the church by John Bruner, for the sum of \$80.



in 1861, who remained until 1866, when Reverend J. F. Hendy was called to the pastorate. The church dividing on the Civil War question, the Second Presbyterian Church was organized April 20, 1862, with thirty-seven members who worshipped in the female academy on the corner of Fifth and Busseron streets until they built a brick church on Main, near Sixth street, and called as pastor the Reverend E. S. Wilson. He was succeeded by Reverend Joseph Vance, and he by H. B. Thayer. In 1872 the asperities of the Civil War having become obliterated or softened between the First and Second Churches, the two bodies became reunited, the Reverend Hendy withdrawing and the Reverend Vance succeeding to the joint pastorate. Reverend E. P. Whallen succeeded him in August, 1878, continuing until 1888, when the Reverend Thomas S. Scott was installed and remained until 1894, when he was succeeded by the Reverend George Knox.

Under the administration of the Reverend Whallen the old house of worship, built in 1831, was razed and a portion of the new structure was erected at a cost of \$15,000, and completed in 1899, under the successful administration of the Reverend George Knox, making the total cost of the present building about \$25,000, rendering it a model of beauty, equipment and convenience, with a seating capacity of 600. It was dedicated in May, 1899, and the following hymn was written for and used in the dedicatory services by the author:

DEDICATION HYMN.

Oh, Lord, on this auspicious day,  
Thy people in their temple meet  
To dedicate it and to lay  
The offering at the Savior's feet.

In faith we to the altar bring  
Our soul's devotion, and each voice  
Would, with the sweetest accents, sing  
Thy praises as we here rejoice.

Bestow a blessing on us now,  
As we adoring look above,  
And sanctify each prayer and vow,  
And fill our souls with joy and love.

May seed, within this vineyard sown,  
Be nurtured by Thy grace divine,  
And yield full harvests for Thy throne,  
And all the glory shall be Thine.

Reverend Dr. Hunter succeeded to the pastorate in 1901 and the church has a bright future.

At the present time the Church of the State is divided into eight Presbyteries, with a total of 259 ministers and 320 churches, and a total membership of 42,783. During the year 1900 the members gave for congregational expenses the sum of \$390,360; to home missions, \$61,581; other benevolences, \$143,244; making a total of \$595,185. Resident membership, 360.

METHODIST EPISCOPAL.

Vincennes circuit appears upon the minutes of the District of Vincennes in 1810, making three fields of labor, and Mr. William Winans, who had been admitted on trial in the western conference the year before, was sent here, and his advent marked the beginning of the propa-

gation of Methodism in Vincennes. The following incident is recorded as having occurred at one of his meetings: He had an appointment to preach in town one night and



METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, ORGANIZED IN 1809.

had for his audience Governor William Henry Harrison and one other person. There was but one candle to give light and nothing to place it upon. To relieve the diffi-



culty the Governor held the candle while the young preacher read his hymn and text\*. He was sent from here to Mississippi District, Louisiana, the following year. He became, in time, distinguished and a doctor of divinity. Tradition gives a little episode in the life of the Reverend Winans while here. It is stated that while the pow-wow was in progress between Governor Harrison and Tecumseh, when the same had reached an acute stage, the Reverend Winans stood in the front door of the Harrison mansion, with a gun in hand, ready to go to the General's aid, if attacked by the Indians. This shows that, while he was a soldier of the cross, he was no less a soldier in the cause of American liberty.

It is presumed that the church was organized in 1809, the year preceding the advent of Reverend Winans, he being the first supply pastor, as the next year, 1810, Vincennes appears on the conference minutes as St. Vincennes.

The first general conference of the church convened in New Albany in 1833. The State has been divided into eight conferences, Bloomington, Connersville, Evansville, Indianapolis, Moores Hill, New Albany and Vincennes. It has under its charge 321 ministers; 220 are on the office list. The seventy-first session of the General Conference was held in Vincennes September 16, 1902, continuing one week, and having an attendance of 500 delegates.

Goodspeed, in his History of Knox County, says the Methodist Church was organized in 1803, by the Reverend William Winans, which is an error, as the Reverend Wi-

---

\* Indiana Miscellany, by Rev. W. C. Smith, p. 52.

naus, as seen above, did not come to Vincennes circuit until the latter part of 1810, where he remained a year and was sent to Mississippi. He was, while here, a licentiate, only, and there is no recorded evidence of the time when an organization of the church took place. The presumption is that the church was first organized in 1809, but did not become a station until 1829. In 1828 lot 132, on the corner of Buntin and Third streets, was purchased, the deed being made to David S. Bonner, Richard Posey and Thomas Collins, and a house of worship was subsequently built thereon. A more substantial building replaced the first one on the same lot about 1854. In 1894 the lot on the corner of Fourth and Perry streets was purchased with a view of erecting a stone church on it, the corner stone of which was laid April 17, 1899. The present building was completed and occupied later in the same year, and is a beautiful structure. The cost of the building and lot was \$25,000.

There has been about seventy pastors and junior preachers connected with this church since it was established. Those who have been promoted to the office of presiding elder were: James Axley, Peter Cartwright, George Lock, Aaron Wood, Daniel McIntire, Hayden Hayes and John Kyser, all of whom are now deceased; and B. F. Rawlins, William B. Zaring, William McKee Hester, M. M. Hobbs, W. B. Collins, M. S. Heavenridge and the present popular official, H. C. Clippinger. The Reverend T. H. Willis is the present eloquent and efficient pastor. Total membership is placed at 468. The spread of the church in the State has been phenomenal.

## EPISCOPAL.

The Protestant Episcopal Church had a mission here as early as 1823, served by the Reverend Henry M. Shaw. For a time services were held in the unfinished University building, which was fitted up for that purpose, under the direction of Rector Shaw. Subsequently, after that building passed into the hands of the Catholic Church, by permission, through arrangements with the town authorities, a room in the city hall was fitted up for church purposes and used until St. James Church was erected and consecrated.

On the 7th day of October, 1839, the communicants and friends interested in the church met at the residence of Mr. George Davis to consider the matter of organizing a parish. The Reverend B. B. Killikelly, a missionary priest, was present and presided. Those present organized a parish, and named it St. James Church of Vincennes. George Davis and James W. Greenhow were chosen wardens and a vestry was elected. After the organization was completed the Reverend B. B. Killikelly was chosen the first rector, and accepted the charge, entering upon his duties at once. In 1840 the officers purchased the lot on which their present edifice now stands, on the southeast corner of Fourth and Busseron streets, for \$400. In 1841 a movement was made to secure funds for the erection of a building, and with that object in view their rector, the Reverend Killikelly, made a tour east, going as far as England, where he received substantial donations for the church erection fund—one of ten pounds, by Queen Adelaide, widow of William IV; and among other distinguished subscribers was



Mr. Gladstone. On the return of the Reverend Killikelly the erection of a church building was commenced and completed in the summer of 1843, and dedicated on August 2nd in that same year by Bishop Kemper, missionary bishop of the Northwest. The Reverend Killikelly resigned about this time, and was succeeded by the Reverend Foster Thayer, who in turn was succeeded by the Reverend Killikelly again, who remained rector some years more.

The next rector, the Reverend A. Varrian, entered upon his pastorate in 1850, and was succeeded by the following rectors, in the order named: The Reverends F. Elweil, D. E. Loveridge, John F. Esch, W. H. Carter, A. F. Freeman, J. F. Gay, Thomas Austin, D. D., William Morrall, Peter McFarland, A. A. Abbott (now Bishop of Cleveland), C. S. Sargent, G. Graham Adams, Edwin Johnson, George Taylor Griffin and De Lou Burke, the latter being the present rector. The church, as originally built, did not include the tower, which was constructed in 1865. The church roll, while never very large (there being now less than sixty active members), in influence and standing maintains a high position in the community, and seems fairly prosperous. Several young men have been prepared for the ministry within its sacred portals, and have gone out into the world to preach the gospel of Christ with success.

#### BAPTIST.

There may have been, and probably was, religious services held here by the Baptist denomination at a very early date, as that denomination had a missionary in the county, the Reverend James McQuaid, who organized a church in

Widner township as early as 1809. No record exists that preaching occurred prior to 1861, when the Reverend J. S. Gillespie came here. He held a series of meetings in the Methodist Episcopal Church. He returned again in 1862, leaving a prosperous church at Greencastle to organize one here, which was accomplished May 1, 1862, in the residence of Mrs. Woodman, composed of the following members: Mrs. W. J. Heberd, Mrs. David Buck, Mrs. William Floro, Mrs. Eliza Wise, Miss Lou Duree, Mrs. L. Gillespie, Miss Gillespie, Christian Raller and the Reverend J. S. Gillespie. They purchased a lot on the corner of Broadway and Sixth streets, and erected a house of worship about 1866 at a cost of \$6,000, adding a bell and furnishings complete in 1868. The Reverend Gillespie resigned in 1867, and was succeeded by the Reverend L. B. Robinson, who was in turn succeeded by the following pastors in the order named: The Reverends B. F. Cavens (in 1871), Dr. Stinson (of Terre Haute), J. Brandenburg (in 1875), J. H. Butler (1883), the Reverend Patterson, B. F. Keith, William Thomas, Thomas Wolford and W. G. Law, the present pastor, who entered upon his duties on January 1, 1901. The present enrollment of members is 234, and the pastor reports the church well organized and as enjoying a good degree of prosperity.

#### CHRISTIAN.

So far as records show, the Christian Church (so designated to distinguish it from other Protestant branches of the Christian Church Universal) was organized in Vincennes not before the third Sunday in June, 1833. By

whom it was organized is not positively known, but among the initial members were Henry D. Wheeler and wife, Samuel Piety and wife and Mrs. Harriet Judah. In the early years of the church the organization possessed no house of worship and had no pastor, holding their services in private residences, the city hall and the court house. Accessions followed in due time, with substantial God-fearing citizens, such as Doctor J. R. Mantell, Alphonso Draper and others, when a building lot was secured on Second street, between Buntin and Perry streets, and in 1846 a brick structure was commenced, but not completed and dedicated until October, 1848. For many years the church was without a regular pastor, the pulpit being supplied occasionally by evangelists having other churches in their charge for their support. The Reverend Alexander Campbell, the founder of this branch of the Protestant Church in the United States, once paid a visit to the Vincennes church, and ministered to the flock with great acceptability. In 1865 this church called its first pastor, the Reverend J. J. Holton, who was followed, in 1869, by Elder W. H. Tiller, who was in turn succeeded by the Reverend J. F. Clark. The latter ministered to his people for twenty-one years—a deserving compliment to a devoted and loving minister of Christ. He was followed by the Reverend J. N. Jessup, and he by G. M. Weimer. Then came the present efficient and acceptable pastor, the Reverend William Oeschger, March 1, 1901.

The church has prospered, having now enrolled 500 members, and will soon erect a fine massive structure on the corner of Broadway and Third streets.



## GERMAN PROTESTANT.

The St. John's Evangelical and the St. John's Lutheran Churches worshipped as one body in 1855, in a church on the corner of Eighth and Scott streets, and this union continued until 1859, when a division occurred, the Lutheran branch purchasing the interest of the Evangelicals for the sum of \$400, and becoming the owners of the church edifice.

## LUTHERAN.

The St. John's Lutheran Church was served then by the Reverend Peter Senel, who was installed October 16, 1859. He was succeeded by the following pastors, in the order named: The Reverends J. D. F. Mayer, J. W. Mueller; F. R. Forman, September 26, 1869; C. R. W. Hugel, September 26, 1880; G. Goesswein, January 11, 1885; Carl Kretzeman, September 12, 1897, the present efficient and eloquent pastor who has for his assistant the Reverend Martin Kretzeman, who was installed as such assistant August 4, 1901.

The old church gave way to the present substantial and commodious building in 1876.

A parochial day school and Sunday school are conducted by the pastors. A parsonage is also erected on the half square occupied by the church and school buildings. Total voting membership of this church is eighty-two; total membership, 370; total scholarships, ninety. The church has prospered greatly and is harmonious.

## ST. JOHN'S GERMAN EVANGELICAL.

This organization separated from the Lutheran branch in August, 1859, and had for its pastor the Reverend C. Hoffmeister. They built a frame church on the corner of Fifth and Hart streets. In 1886 a commodious brick structure was erected on the corner of Fifth and Shelby streets. This congregation has also more recently erected a parsonage and parochial school building. They have had as pastors the following, in the order named: The Reverends F. Durlitz, William Jung, N. Burkhardt, Peter Webber, Albert Schorey, O. J. Kuss, Frederick Reller, Henry Mehl, and again Albert Schorey. The Reverend Louis Hohmann is now pastor.

The present membership of the church is eighty-eight. This church has prospered under its several pastors, and is doing a good work in the interests of Christianity.

## AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL.

This church was organized by the Reverend W. P. Quinn, at what period no record exists to show. Samuel Clark, Cornelius Sims, W. H. Stewart, James Brunswick, and Henry Ryder were the initiatory members. The first building erected was in the year 1839, on the corner of Tenth and Buntin streets. This one was replaced by a brick structure, 35x50, in 1875. The name of the present pastor is the Reverend G. H. White.

## CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN.

This branch of the Presbyterian Church must have held service in this county sixty years or more ago, as they organized a church in Palmyra township about that time,

yet no record is given by the pastor of the church in Vincennes that preaching ever occurred here before the advent of the Reverend Henry Clay Yates in 1890, when a church was organized with a membership of twenty-one. The church building was erected during the year 1890, and was dedicated in the spring of 1891. The Reverend Yates was its first pastor, continuing six years, when he was succeeded by the Reverend F. A. Grant, who remained but six months, being succeeded by the Reverend J. N. McDonald. The latter was pastor for four years, being succeeded by the Reverend J. B. Miller, present pastor, in 1901.

Total membership of Vincennes Church is 175. Total membership in the State, 3,788. Total value of property, \$183,300. Amount contributed for church purposes in 1900 was \$17,370. The church seems fairly prosperous under its energetic pastor.

#### B'NAI ISRAEL CONGREGATION.

This church was organized in 1867, and for some years held regular meetings under the leadership of a Rabbi, but owing to many removals of its members from the city, their synagogue and priest were given up. Its members embraced some of the best business men of the city. Its trustees are Benjamin Kuhn, Myron Rindskoph and Victor Schonfield; Secretary, Dan Oestricher.

Ete Chaim Lodge, No. 205, I. O. B. B., was organized 1875. J. B. Kuhn, Pr., Dan Oestricher, Secretary.



## Chapter VII.

### BIOGRAPHIES—FRANCOIS MORGAN, SIEUR DE VINCENNES.

MUCH has been written about the founder of Vincennes, regarding his nationality, genealogy and age, and the question may not yet be considered settled; but the presumption is that all is now known that will ever be. From the best sources of information obtainable it may be stated that he was born in Canada (although some say that he was a native of France), but at what time is not positively known. It is recorded that he received an ensign's commission in 1699. He is believed to be the son of Louisa Bissot (the sister of Jean Baptiste Bissot, Sieur de Vincennes), whose husband was Seraphim Morgane. According to Duboisson's narrative, page 9, the subject of this sketch fought gallantly in defending the fort at Detroit from a combined Indian attack, May, 1712. He was subsequently sent West, and was at Mackinaw, and, according to Law's History, he was engaged in some service on the lakes toward St. Marie in 1725. "At what time he took possession here is not exactly known; probably somewhere about the year 1732."

On the death of his uncle, Jean Baptiste Bissot, Sieur de Vincennes, he assumed his title of Sieur de Vincennes. He worked his way west to the Posts Miamis and Ouiatenon, after which he is known to have been at Kaskaskia,

October 20, 1727, where he and Louis St. Auge, his fellow-officer, attended the nuptials of two of the inhabitants.\*

The next recorded history of his whereabouts is that of his being at the Che-pe-ko-ke village in 1733. Law, p. 19, says: "There are other documents there (Kaskaskia) signed by him (Vincennes) as witness in 1733-1734, among them (records) a receipt for one hundred pistoles, received from his father-in-law on his marriage. From all these proofs it is clearly evident that he was here previous to 1733." That he was at the village previous to that time is positive; for his letters recently published (1902) by the Indiana Historical Society, dated March 7 and 21, 1733, Vincennes, show this. In his letter of March 21, 1733, he says, in answer to the inquiry as to his progress at the post, "I have built a fort and erected two houses, but need a guard-room and a barracks for lodging soldiers, and thirty more soldiers and an officer, as it is not possible to remain in this place with so few troops." It would seem from this statement of Vincennes that what some writers have said about the Indians here receiving the priests and French soldiers with open arms is entirely too rosy and absurd for credence. The savage Indian can no more change his nature toward the white man than a leopard can change his spots. He stated further that he was "embarrassed by the war with the Chickasaws, who have been here twice this spring."

He continued here as commandant until 1736, when his superior officer, Major de Artagette, ordered him to join his forces in a campaign war against the Chickasaw Nation in Louisiana. This wing of the army was to be

---

\* Mason, "Kaskaskia and Its Parish Records," in *American History*, Vol VI, p. 175.

joined with one from New Orleans by agreement, but, owing to some blunder or unavoidable cause, a junction was not formed of the two bodies, and Major Artagette's force alone attacked the Chickasaws, and, after a bloody, prolonged battle, the French forces were defeated, and Artagette, Vincennes, the Jesuit Father, and many soldiers were captured and burned at the stake.

In relation to his death Charlevoix said: "We have just received very bad news from Louisiana and our war with the Chickasaws. The French have been defeated. Among the slain is Monsieur de Vincennes, who ceased not until his latest breath to exhort the men to behave worthy of their religion and their country."

Thus ignobly perished the hero-patriot and founder of our city. He well deserves a beautiful monument from his countrymen, whose shaft should perpetuate his noble and valiant deeds of patriotism.

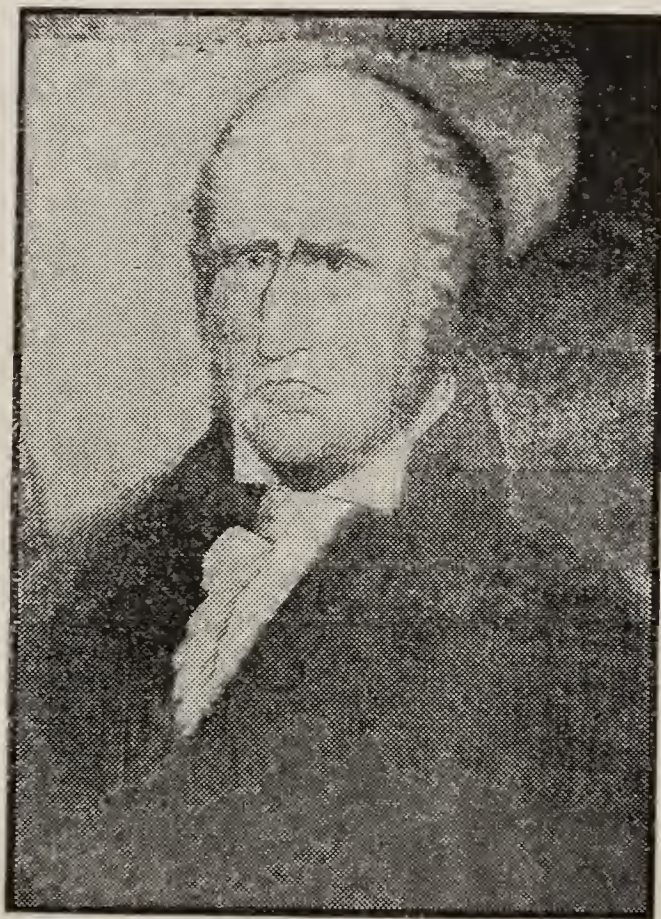
Vincennes! Thy name will live in story,  
Whilst others, writ on brass and stone,  
Will lose, in passing time, a glory  
That round them once in brightness shown.

GEORGE ROGERS CLARK.

The subject of this sketch, being the prime factor in the capture of Vincennes in the cause of American liberty, occupies an important position in the annals of the old town, which would be incomplete without the mention of his noble life, character and eminent services—a life full of startling incidents and stirring events, which impressed themselves indelibly upon the early history of the great West, although only a brief notice of them can be recorded here.



George Rogers Clark, who has been called the "Hannibal of the West," was born in Albemarle County, Virginia, on the 19th day of November, 1752, within one and one-half miles of Monticello, the celebrated resting place of President Thomas Jefferson. He was of Scotch-English descent, his mother being a lineal descendant of the celebrated John Rogers, who was burned at the stake for his inflexible religious opinions. Some members of the family, like himself, have been notable characters; one of his brothers, William, having been associated with Mr. Lewis in the celebrated expedition of Lewis and Clark to the Pacific Ocean. George did not receive a classical education, his tastes being inclined to mathematics and surveying, although he was under the tutelage of a noted educator, Daniel Robertson, and had for a time as a classmate James Madison, who afterward became President. When but nineteen years of age Clark started West with a surveying party, and was at Steubenville, O., in 1770, and also in Kentucky. He soon returned to Virginia, but was back



GENERAL GEORGE ROGERS CLARK.

and forth for the next few years; and, when there was an Indian outbreak, he joined a company in Ohio to oppose the hostiles. In 1775 he was engaged in surveying in Kentucky, and located some lands near Frankfort. But he was also about Harrodsburg and other places, familiarizing himself with the country and the settlers. In 1776 he went to Virginia and settled up his business with a view of making Kentucky his home, and induced his parents to emigrate thither. About this time he developed into a politician, as well as a military expert, and, finding the people of the settlements unorganized, he impressed upon them the need of union of action, and the importance of sending delegates to the Legislature of Virginia. At his instance two delegates, himself and Gabriel Jones, were sent, who were to impress upon the parent State the duty of caring for and helping the far-away colony. When they presented themselves at Williamsburg, the capital, the Legislature had adjourned, and the State officers could not lawfully make any advances to buy materials of warfare for the protection of the settlements. Jones returned, but Clark remained, and pleaded so successfully with the Governor, Patrick Henry, that the latter issued an order for five hundred pounds of powder, to be delivered at Pittsburgh subject to Clark's order. He wrote to the settlers at Harrodsburg to send for it, but the letter was lost, and later in the year he found the powder still at Pittsburgh. He had remained to meet with the Legislature at its next session, and Jones, returning to act with him, they were then recognized as delegates. Learning that the powder had not yet been sent for, they took the river route home, and, having secured some boatmen, they sailed down the river and



landed at a point near where Maysville, Ky., is located, and there hid the powder, finding that they did not have enough force to transfer it to Harrodsburg. On their return home a company was sent for the powder, and succeeded in delivering it at its destination. Clark had so endeared himself to the settlers that he was looked up to as their leader, and he proceeded to organize them, thus forming the foundation for the great commonwealth of Kentucky. Having formed the male portion of the little community into a militia, he equipped them with material for defensive warfare, and his ambition then went out in a desire to take the offensive against the English, who held certain points, and gave encouragement to Indian outbreaks. He, as a preliminary, sent out two spies to visit Kaskaskia and Vincennes posts, and to learn their strength and the temper of the French people living at these places. The messengers returned with encouraging news, but, as he had no authority to make an aggressive move, nor the means to sustain him if he did, he determined to lay his scheme before the Assembly, and, accordingly, returned to Virginia. He presented his plans to Governor Henry, who, being favorably impressed with them, called in counsel Thomas Jefferson, George Wythe and George Mason, to consider the matter. This eminent triumvirate, in council with the great Governor Henry and the dashing young hero of the West, Clark, proved themselves worthy of the task of evolving the magnificent scheme that brought to Virginia's door the gift of the Northwest Territory. The counselors readily adopted Clark's plans, and he was supplied with £1,250 and authorized to raise seven companies of fifty men each to further the scheme, trust-



ing to the Legislature to legalize their action. The Governor issued two sets of instructions to Clark for his guidance, one of a secret nature and the other for the public.\* The one for the public merely authorized Clark to raise seven companies of militia in any county of the State and proceed to Kentucky, they to be under the orders of Clark. The secret order was to advance on Kaskaskia or Vincennes, and set forth in detail as to procedure and advice as to his actions with any conquered enemies and friends joining the American cause. Gathering his troops together at the Falls of the Ohio, he consolidated them at "Corn Island,"† which he fortified. Having supplied himself with boats for descending the river, the day before his departure he, for the first time, informed his troops of their destination. Captain Dillard's company at once mutinied, and about thirty of them escaped that night to the Kentucky shore. Clark sent troopers after them, with instructions to capture or kill the deserters. Only ten were returned to the fort; the others reached Harrodsburg after enduring hardships and suffering. The news of their desertion having preceded them, they were denied admittance to the fort for some time. The troops had been promised by the Governor, Jefferson, Wythe and Mason that if they were successful they would be given 320 acres each of land in addition to their salaries. This promise was faithfully kept, and 149,000 acres of land were set apart for these soldiers and officers. These lands were located in Clark, Floyd and Scott counties, and were known as "Clark's Grant." All things being in readi-

---

\* For the plans of Clark to succeed, perfect secrecy was necessary, and hence the matter was not placed before the legislature.

† So called because it is said that corn was first raised there in Kentucky.

ness, on the 24th day of June, 1778, the boats ladened with cargo and 175 troops started. Clark says: "We left our little island and ran about a mile up the river in order to gain the main channel, and shot the falls at the very moment of the sun being in a great eclipse." This circumstance was calculated to add solemnity to the occasion, and awe and forebodings to the superstitious. He had first contemplated an attack upon Vincennes, but, learning it was well garrisoned, he steered down the river, with Kaskaskia as his objective point, and, after a four days' run, he landed on a small island at the mouth of the Tennessee river. While resting there they captured a boat containing six hunters who had left Kaskaskia eight days before, and who gave much information and expressed a desire to join Clark's force, which offer was accepted, after a consultation. Hiding their boats up a creek, the next morning they started for a hundred-and-twenty-mile tramp through the wilderness, prairie and swamps. On the third day of their journey one of the new accessions, a man named Sanders, who essayed to guide them, got bewildered and got off the right course, and the suspicion was at once formed that he was playing traitor. Clark gave him one hour to find the road or be shot as an alternative. After circling about some time, he succeeded in finding the road, and then all went well. The man proved to be a true patriot and was of much value to the army. On the 4th day of July the army got within three miles of Kaskaskia, and, after night-fall, they marched up the Kaskaskia River one mile to a farm house, taking the family prisoners, who informed Clark that the garrison was not expecting an attack, and no sentries were out. Finding plenty of boats, the soldiers

soon crossed the river in silence. Clark says: "I divided my little army into two divisions and ordered one to surround the town. With the other I broke into the fort, secured the Governor, Mr. Rochblave, in fifteen minutes, and had every street secured; sent runners through the town, ordering the people, on pain of death, to keep close to their houses, which order they observed, and before daylight had the whole town disarmed."\* Thus ended the splendid, though hazardous, campaign of Clark's little army, which was but the earnest of the more brilliant achievement that was to culminate in the overthrow of the British army in the Northwest Territory, and give to Virginia a small empire, in the capture of Vincennes, seven months later.

Up to this time Kaskaskia was the New France, and was, to the French in America, what Paris was to France. In 1721 the Jesuits erected a monastery and college there, and it was the center of gayety, and fashion, and happiness. "For many years," Governor Reynolds of Illinois, in his history, says, "Kaskaskia was the largest town west of the Alleghany mountains, and was a tolerable one before the existence of Pittsburgh, Cincinnati or New Orleans," and was the capital of Illinois during its territorial existence, after its capture by the Americans."

"It is marvelous that the town, being so well fortified," says Major Bowman, "and able to have fought successfully a thousand men, should be so easily captured by less than two hundred half-starved and foot-sore soldiers." The garrison on that night must have given themselves over to revelry, as they were taken wholly unawares, which con-

---

\* Clark's letter to Mason.



dition of affairs, through luck and boldness, Clark happily took advantage of. Having been taught by the British that the Americans killed all prisoners, the people were in despair, and offered to become slaves to their captors if their lives and those of their families would only be spared. To meet the exigency and to disabuse their minds, Clark ordered the assembling of all the principal men of the town who were lamenting their misfortune, and explained to them the object of their mission, and that it was not to enslave them, but to win their zeal and attachment to the cause of the Americans, and that they could enjoy their property and be protected in their liberty if they gave their allegiance to America. "No sooner had they heard this than they fell into transports of joy that surprised me," says Clark, "and they told me that they had always been kept in the dark as to the dispute between America and Great Britain, and had been prejudiced against the Americans; that they were now persuaded that they ought to, and did that night, espouse their cause, to the number of 105, by taking the oath of allegiance to the States." Before starting on his campaign to Vincennes Clark captured Cahokia. His advance on Vincennes and its capture by him are narrated fully in another chapter of this work.\*

Immediately after the capture of Vincennes, General Clark conceived the desire to advance on Detroit, and the great importance of such a move caused him to at once commence preparing for it, but there were so many obstacles in the way that the scheme was finally abandoned. His troops were worn out, money became depreciated, the failure of promised additions to his army and a strengthen-

---

\* See Chapters III and IV.

ing of Detroit's defenses, all tended toward an abandonment of the project. On August 5, 1779, he issued an order establishing his headquarters at the Falls of the Ohio, and soon moved the garrison there to the mainland, on the Kentucky side, and drew a plan for the town of Louisville, then took up his quarters there.

The Indians having made frequent raids from Ohio into Kentucky settlements, Clark got together about 1,000 men and moved to the mouth of the Licking river and started for an Indian town, Chillicothe. The Indians having been apprised of his coming, fled and Clark destroyed the town and crops and moved on to Piqua, where he fought a battle, defeating the Indians, when he burned their huts, destroyed their crops and retreated, having taught the savages a lesson. He soon afterwards went to Virginia to advocate an attack on Detroit. While he was there Benedict Arnold made a raid into Virginia, but was compelled to retreat by Clark, at the head of a company, with a loss of seventeen. He was a Brigadier-General of the State troops, but he did not like it because the State officers did not have equal rank with those of the Federation. His complaint was of no avail, and he was compelled to remain under State orders. He again made an appeal to Washington for aid to carry out his plans against Detroit, but, owing to the stress of money matters and the dearth of troops, the President could lend no aid, but joined Governor Jefferson in approval of the plan. The Governor was anxious for Clark to make the trial and issued orders for troops and supplies, but, instead of 2,000 men, only 400 reported at Pittsburgh. He started down the river with these, hoping that some others would follow; one com-

pany did, but was ambuscaded and destroyed. This disaster had such a discouraging effect upon both Clark and his troops that the advance was abandoned. After returning to the Falls he had some gunboats made at his own expense for the purpose of plying the waters between that place and Cincinnati, which materially aided in preventing Indian raids both on land and on water. The Miamis still continuing to cross into Kentucky, he headed another army and marched on their settlements at Chillicothe and Piqua, in November, killing many savages, burning their houses and destroying their crops, leaving their women and children unsheltered, with winter coming on and nothing to eat. The demoralizing effect of the loss of their property resulted in keeping the Indians on the north side of the Ohio river. A cessation of hostilities occurred between the Colonies and England, September 3, 1783, and Congress ratified the treaty of peace on January 14, 1784. On March 1, 1784, Congress accepted the gift of the Territory from Virginia, and Clark, seeing no future for him, as he was a State officer, sent in his resignation and he was released from his command. After Virginia had ceased to care for the Northwest Territory and the United States becoming neglectful of their interests in their new possessions, things began to be badly managed, mostly on account of the nonpayment of troops and failure to provide them with sufficient provisions and the existence of worthless scrip, which the people had at first taken at par and which fell to 1,000 per cent. discount. The murmurs of discontent became so loud that there existed great danger of the loss of the prestige gained by Clark only a few years before. The people petitioned the Kentuckians for the

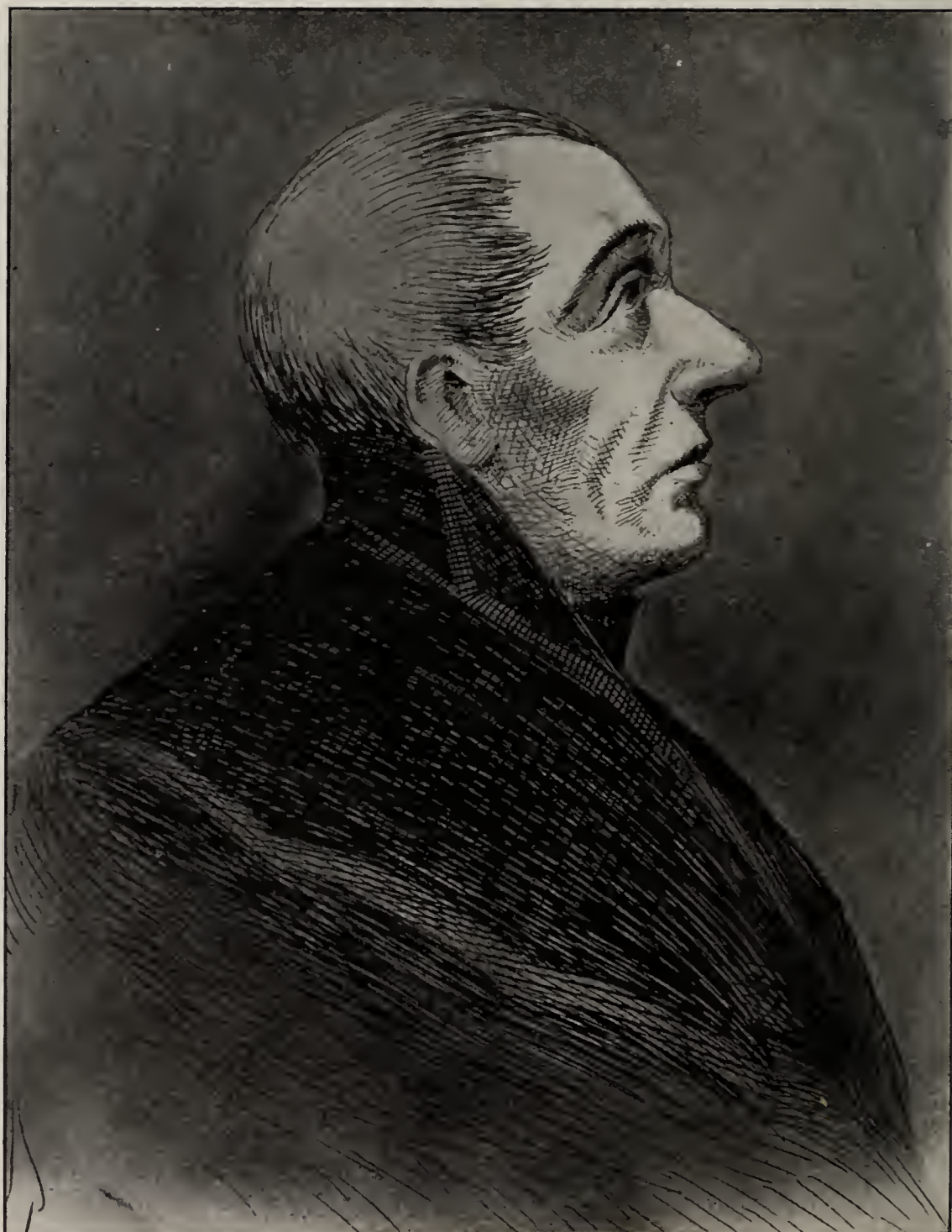


return of Clark, and in 1786, by authority of the Kentucky Council, assembled at Danville, and under sanction of Governor Henry, Clark congregated his troops at the falls and started for the Wabash region. Upon his arrival at Vincennes he was hampered by the nonarrival of stores, which had been spoiled and delayed by river transportation. Finally he marched up as far as Ouiatenon. The Indians had retreated. About this time mutiny was rife in the camp; pleadings by Clark, even to tears, availed nothing, and several hundred deserted. Desertions and lack of provisions caused him to return to Vincennes, when he detailed 130 men for the garrison. This act, although sanctioned by a council of officers, for the protection of the local and general interests of the country, was misjudged and criticised by his enemies, and when he returned to Kentucky he was relieved of all authority. About this time the United States Government assumed command and garrisoned Vincennes, by sending Major Hamtranck with a company of soldiers here.

General Clark being relieved of military authority, unfortunately for his reputation, accepted a Major-Generalship in the French service against Spain. That country held possession of the Mississippi river to the great detriment of the American trade, and Clark thought it would be a great benefit to the States if he could break the power of Spain by the capture of New Orleans, and made a proposition to raise 2,000 men to accomplish this. His enemies immediately reported this item to the Washington Government and steps were taken to stop the contemplated raid against a friendly (?) government. Clark, finding his motives being misconstrued and obstacles placed in his way,

abandoned the enterprise and permanently retired to civic pursuits in Indiana, and settled at Clarksville, a town laid off where Jeffersonville now stands, on a thousand-acre tract reserved from the "Clark Grant" for that purpose by the United States Government. Here he lived in quiet retirement and finally became paralyzed in 1809; and one day, being alone, he fell into an open fireplace, when one of his limbs was frightfully burned before assistance came. After this accident he was removed to the residence of his brother-in-law, Major William Croghan, near Louisville, Ky., where he remained during the balance of his life. He never married. In 1812 Virginia voted him a sword and a pension of \$400 per annum. He died February 13, 1818, and was buried at Locust Grove, a private burial ground at the country seat of his brother-in-law, Major Croghan, situated a few miles above the city of Louisville, Ky. The court in Louisville adjourned upon hearing of his death, and the bar appointed Honorable John Rowan to deliver an eulogy upon his life and services, and passed resolutions of condolence and resolved that the members should wear crepe for thirty days as a token of respect for the departed. Thus ended the eventful and grand career of one of the most remarkable characters in American history; one who deserved more and received less than any public man, measured by the results obtained through his patriotism, energy, foresight and skill. Had he received the encouragement and aid to enable him to have consummated his advance on Detroit, as proposed and urged by him, especially soon after the capture of Vincennes, the mainstay of English influence would have been stricken down, which was the feeder and energizer of the





REVEREND PIERRE GIBAULT.



Indians, and thousands of lives would have been spared, millions of money saved, and Canada swallowed up by the Union, and English prestige forever driven from the Western Continent. The debt of gratitude and honor that is yet due him by America has still to be paid, and his memory fittingly embalmed on the roll of honor as one deserving immortal fame. To George Rogers Clark, next to George Washington, the father of his country, is due the greatness of the Union.

#### REVEREND PIERRE GIBAULT.

In the history of Nations we find generally that heroic deeds of valor are awarded to military actors in the great drama of life, as it passes in review before the gaze of the people, but civic actors have achieved victories no less worthy of renown gained in quieter ways than amid the din of battle, through life's duties well performed.

The subject of this brief sketch, Reverend Pierre Gibault, was born in April, 1737, in the Dominion of Canada, and was educated for the priesthood, and in early manhood evinced a desire to give his services to the church in the western wilds, as a missionary to the pioneers and Indians, who were without the light of the Gospel which leads to higher life and civilization. As soon as he was ordained, in 1768, he started for the West along the Canadian border to his objective point, Kaskaskia, where he arrived the latter part of the year, and it is said that he dedicated the first church erected in the city of St. Louis, in 1769. His mission was to the "Illinois Country" and hence his labors were confined not alone to Kaskaskia. In

the year 1770 he visited the village of Vincennes. He was no ordinary man, and wherever his mission took him he very soon, by his intuition of human character, affability, simplicity and sweetness of manners, gained the confidence of the settlers and Indians. During his first visit to Vincennes he was received with the utmost cordiality and he soon became a favorite with all classes. In March he returned to Kaskaskia, his usual place of residence, but for several years he continued to pay occasional visits to the "Post." He was for a time the only priest in Indiana. His zeal and energy were wonderful, his labors almost surpassing belief.\* We find from the records of the church that, in July, 1778, he was at Vincennes (having been won over to the American cause at Kaskaskia by Colonel Clark), exerting himself successfully in inducing the French inhabitants to declare in favor of the United States against Great Britain. At this time he had gone to Vincennes at the instance of Colonel George Rogers Clark, in company with Doctor LaFonte as civil magistrate, Captain Leonard Helm representing the military of Virginia, and Moses Henry, interpreter and envoy to the Indians. At Reverend Gibault's request a meeting was called at the church—the English commandant, Governor Abbot, having gone to Detroit and left the garrison of French militia under St. Maria Racine—and, through the Reverend Father's persuasive eloquence, the inhabitants took the oath of allegiance to the American cause and the garrison and fort were delivered over to Captain Helm. Thus it was that the first capture of "Fort Sackville" (and the village of Vincennes) was without bloodshed, and wholly

---

\* Law's Hist. Vincennes, p. 146.

through the instrumentality of the patriot priest-ally, that hero of astute diplomacy—Pierre Gibault. Clark, not having troops to maintain the advantage gained, and being rendered thereby incapable of garnering the fruits of this glorious victory of Father Gibault, the village and fort were soon retaken by the English commander, Governor Henry Hamilton. But the seed of liberty had been sown and had taken deep root, and as soon as opportunity under the protection of Clark's little army offered, the plant sent forth its flowers in perpetual bloom, to bless the people in all time with their fragrance. The influence of Father Gibault's labors were more than local and his name should be cherished by American citizens with an ardor fully equal to that displayed for LaFayette or Rochambeau, for the beneficent results following Gibault's patriotic zeal, his tenacious fidelity to the American cause of liberty, will give measure for measure with those great French Generals.

Following the capture of Vincennes Reverend Gibault became pastor of St. Xavier's church here in 1785 and remained until 1789.

"In 1788 Father Gibault had already requested the Bishop of Quebec to recall him from Vincennes, where, at that time, he had taken up his residence. When his petition, addressed to Governor St. Clair, for a piece of land in Cahokia was granted, or seems to have been granted, Bishop Carroll immediately protested against this attempt to alienate church property to an individual clergyman.\* 'Apparently, in consequence,' says Shea, 'the Reverend Gibault left the diocese of Baltimore and retired to the

---

\* Letter of Father Schmidt, October 15, 1895, *English Conquest of Northwest*, p. 188.



Spanish Territory beyond the Mississippi.' ” He finally settled in New Madrid, Mo., where he died early in 1804.

Of Father Pierre Gibault it may well be said:

For duties well performed, on earth,  
In measure full he gained renown;  
Which, but in feeble type, presaged  
For him, Heaven's glorious crown.

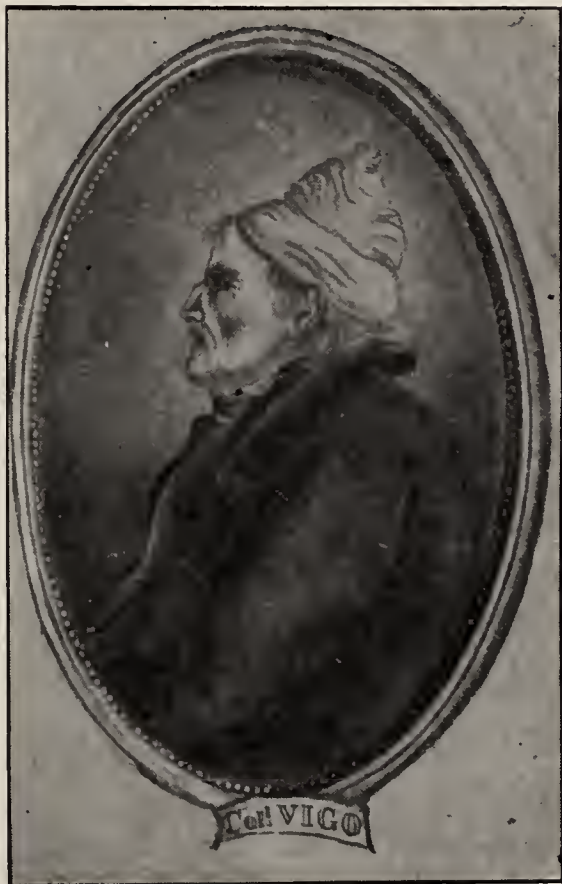
#### FRANCIS VIGO.

Colonel Francis Vigo was one of the notable and distinguished citizens of the old town the last quarter of the eighteenth and the first third of the nineteenth centuries, and his name should ever be held in grateful remembrance by the country at large. He is spoken of by some writers as of Spanish birth, but others contend that he was a native of Sardinia,\* but went into Spain's military service at a very early age; but finally he left the army and drifted into the trade of furs and hides and general merchandising after coming to America. From New Orleans he came to St. Louis about the year 1775. As a trader he became well and favorably known among the Indians and the French inhabitants of all adjacent settlements, and by his friendly demeanor and just treatment of the Indians in his intercourse with them, they became attached to him and trusted him implicitly. Being asked once by an old citizen whence his great influence with the Indians, he replied: "Because I never deceive an Indian." After Colonel Clark had captured Kaskaskia and through strategy had gained possession of Post Vincennes, and Colonel

---

\* It is more probable that he was of Spanish birth, and came from the city of Vigo, situated on the bay of Vigo, in the south of Spain.

Hamilton had retaken it, thus making Clark's position at Kaskaskia precarious, if not untenable, with his small army, the expirations of many of the enlistments of his troops occurring at this time, Clark determined to make a bold strike at Hamilton's position. Before doing this, however, it was important to learn, through spies, the situation at the Post. In his dilemma, it is related by some writers, Colonel Clark made Colonel Vigo, his diplomat and agent, go to Vincennes and ascertain the strength of Lieutenant-Governor Hamilton, the quality of the defenses, and the feeling of the French citizens, before determining the next step in his campaign. And it is said that Vigo was captured while on that duty, at the mouth of the Embarrass river, eight miles below Vincennes, but subsequently re-



COLONEL FRANCIS VIGO.

leased by Hamilton, through the influence of citizens, nothing incriminating having been found upon him indicating that he was a spy. The condition of his release was that he was to return directly to his home in St. Louis, which was then a possession of Spain. It is said that he adhered to his promise, but immediately after his arrival he delayed no longer than was necessary to get a relay, before pro-

ceeding to communicate with Clark at Kaskaskia. That he was the medium of the information to Clark there is no doubt, because the latter alludes to the arrival of Colonel Vigo from Vincennes, bringing the information desired; whether Vigo was in possession of this information for Clark as special envoy or not is not positively known.

Following in the wake of the capture of Hamilton's forces, Colonel Vigo appears on the scene as Colonel Clark's friend and helper in times of need. He cashed Clark's vouchers for necessary expenses of the army, as the latter had failed to receive funds from Virginia to pay the soldiers, or for his commissary supplies for the army. Colonel Vigo, having accumulated much wealth by trading, he dealt it out with a liberal hand to sustain the credit of the Virginia forces and keep that State's credit at par. And yet, to the shame of that State and the United States Government, which became in a few years afterwards the beneficiary of the whole Northwest Territory, Colonel Vigo died a poor man, not having received a cent's remuneration from either Government for his lavish advances of many thousands of dollars, through his generous and patriotic impulses in behalf of the American cause. Petitions to Congress for his reimbursement proved futile for many years; he died March 22, 1836, before the scales of justice had assumed an equilibrium. Colonel Vigo married a Miss Elizabeth Shannon, who was born in Vincennes, March 23, 1770, but she died in early life. So when he died, having no relatives, he left his claim against the Government to his nephews, Archibald B. McKee and Vigo McKee, children of Sarah Shannon, who married Dr. Samuel McKee, Surgeon United States Army at this



Post, and perhaps to Captain R. Buntin's family, as they were connected through Mary Shannon, wife of the Captain. Those interested continued to prosecute the claim, until it was finally referred to a court of claims, which gave judgment in 1875 for \$8,616 principal, and interest to the amount of \$41,282.60, making a total of \$49,898.60.

During Colonel Vigo's prosperity, in the closing days of the eighteenth century, he built a most elegant residence in the town. It stood on a lot near, or on the site of the present Odd Fellows' hall. It was surrounded by a veranda painted white, its blinds the purest tint of green. Its large parlors with their high ceilings, imported mantels, its floors inlaid with diamond-shaped pieces of black walnut and white oak, highly polished, made it a marvel of beauty in those days. It was this beautiful parlor that Governor William Henry Harrison occupied as his first residence upon his arrival in January, 1801, at the invitation of Colonel Vigo, it having been just completed; and the Governor, not finding a suitable house for a residence, accepting the invitation. Colonel Vigo filled the office of Colonel in the 1st Regiment in the Territorial militia in the early part of the last century; he resigned May 5, 1810. In 1805, February 16th, he was granted a license to keep a ferry from his land on the northwest side of the Wabash river and opposite to the town of Vincennes across said river.\* Some writers have doubted that Colonel Vigo ever resided in Vincennes. Nothing is more susceptible of proof than that he was a resident here for quite fifty years. He owned, in addition to his town property (he was possessed of considerable property adjoining town), a farm

---

\* Executive Journal of the Territory, p. 126.

three miles southeast of the town, the residence of his nephew, the late A. B. McKee, where he resided many years. But, before the close of his life, he resided in town, and died in a frame building on Main street, between Fourth and Fifth streets, adjoining the old W. J. Heberd house, a few doors west of the Bishop block, attended by his faithful friend, who had been his ward in early days, "Aunt" Betsy La Plante. To this fact the writer has had oral testimony of living witnesses, on the 8th day of May, 1902, to wit: Mr. Elbridge Gardner, undertaker; Mr. Vital Bouchie and Mrs. Elizabeth Andre—the latter being now about ninety-three years of age. Colonel Vigo was buried in the city cemetery, where the grave is marked by a simple slab of sandstone, with the inscription:

COLONEL FRANCIS VIGO.

DIED 22ND DAY MARCH 1835\*

AGED 96.

He was probably a Catholic in his youth, but according to Z. T. Emerson, in the History of Knox County, p. 70, he did not die in that faith, although a trustee of St. Francis Xavier church from 1818 to 1821. He was loved and honored by his fellow-citizens, as few men have been. The city honored him by naming one of her principal

---

\* NOTE.—The date of 1835 is an error; it was really 1836, as the record of the undertakers, Andrew Gardner & Son, shows. The junior member of this firm, Mr. Eldridge Gardner, who is yet living, remembers all the circumstances connected with the death and burial. Mrs. Doc'or W. W. Hitt, just across the street, being buried the same day, and the inscription on her grave's shaft bears the date of March 22, 1836. Colonel Vigo was born about 1740, and calculating from this, he would have been ninety-six years old at the time of his death.

streets after him, and the county has named one of her townships in honor of him to perpetuate his memory. The Vincennes University has the only oil painting of this hero and patriot; and it is the writer's recollection that one of the first notes of the old State Bank of Indiana, chartered in 1836, had upon it a vignette likeness of him. I think he presented the bill either to the Vincennes Antiquarian Society or to the University. In the lapse of time it has been lost, but may turn up some day as a valued relic in a coming age. When Indiana Territory became a State it named one of the principal northern counties in his honor; and to show his appreciation of the compliment, a stipulation was embodied in his will that a sufficient sum required to purchase a bell for the court house should be paid to Vigo county. This stipulation was complied with and the bell provided thereunder is still in use on the court house at Terre Haute, to call the solons of justice to render justice that was denied its giver during life by his Government.

No more fitting epitaph need be placed over the tomb of Colonel Francis Vigo than the eulogy passed on his life and character by General St. Clair, Governor of the Northwest Territory, in his report to the Secretary of War, in 1790, in which he said:

"To Mr. Vigo, a gentleman of Vincennes, the United States are much indebted, and he is, in truth, the most distinguished person I have almost ever seen."

Brave patriot, noble, good and wise!  
Let all who view thy lonely tomb,  
Remember that beneath there lies  
One worthy spring's perpetual bloom.



FRANCIS BUSSERON, THE FOSTER FATHER OF ALICE  
OF OLD VINCENNES.

Another notable personage who figured most creditably in the early days of Vincennes, was Francis Busseron. He it was who joined Father Gibault in winning over the French people to the American cause, upon the advent of Captain Leonard Helm, Colonel Clark's commissioner to Vincennes on August 6, 1778. When Father Gibault returned to Kaskaskia and informed Colonel Clark of the interest and loyalty M. Busseron had displayed in winning over the French from the English, he sent him a commission as Captain, made him district commandant and authorized him to raise a company of militia to aid the Americans. When Winthrop Sargent, Secretary of the Territory in 1790, made inquiry of the citizens and acting authorities by what right they had been disposing of the public domain, Captain F. Busseron was chosen at the head of a committee appointed by the citizens, to formulate an answer, which showed that he was considered one of the leading men of the town. It was Captain Busseron who gave shelter to Mary Shannon, whose father it is said had been murdered by the Indians, and who had sought him as a friend of her father. He became her foster father and raised her to womanhood, when she was united in marriage to Captain Robert Buntin, a leading citizen. She is the character, now celebrated as "Alice of Old Vincennes," to whom Maurice Thompson gave the honor of raising the American flag over Sackville upon its capture by Colonel Clark. The anachronism is excusable in the author, as he must have a heroine for the dramatic scene of the sur-

render. Had she been born a little earlier than May 1, 1777, the event might have been historically correct in all particulars, since Captain Busseron was the officer of the town and a captain of the militia, as the reputed foster father, Gaspard Roussilon, appeared to have been. History furnishes evidences that the old citizens honored Captain Busseron and the succeeding generations have perpetuated his memory by naming one of the principal streets of the city after him, and the county its most northern township in his honor. And many of his descendants have occupied honorable positions, one of whom is Judge Charles Busseron Lasselle, of Logansport, Ind., now an octogenarian. General Hyacinth Lasselle, who was a resident of Vincennes early in the beginning of the nineteenth century, built the Lasselle Hotel, that stood on the corner of Perry and Second streets, where Bierhaus Brothers' large new building now stands. This hotel was built in 1812, contained fifteen rooms, and was noted as the official "headquarters" of Gen. Thomas Posey, who succeeded Harrison in 1813. The building was burned October 23, 1871.



## Chapter VIII.

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES CONTINUED—GENERAL WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON.

THE ninth President of the United States was William Henry Harrison, son of Benjamin Harrison, an opulent and distinguished citizen of Berkley, Va., and a close friend of President Washington, and was born February 9, 1773. His father was a member of the Continental Congress and was subsequently Governor of Virginia. Young Harrison had all the educational advantages Hampden Sidney college could impart, and his mind was not slow to reap the wealth of knowledge. After concluding his collegiate course he became a pupil of the celebrated Doctor Benjamin Rush, of Philadelphia, with the intention of becoming a physician. But his patriotic and adventurous disposition caused him to throw down the scalpel and medicines and seek a position in the army, when he received the office of Ensign from Washington. He reported to the commander at Fort Washington and the first duty assigned him was the care of a pack-train bound for Fort Hamilton, on the Miami river, forty miles from Fort Washington.

Although but a youth, and rather delicate in appearance, he performed his duty like a veteran, instilling into his subordinates the value of temperance, which would enable them to bear hardships they otherwise could not. He was soon promoted to the rank of Lieutenant and joined the

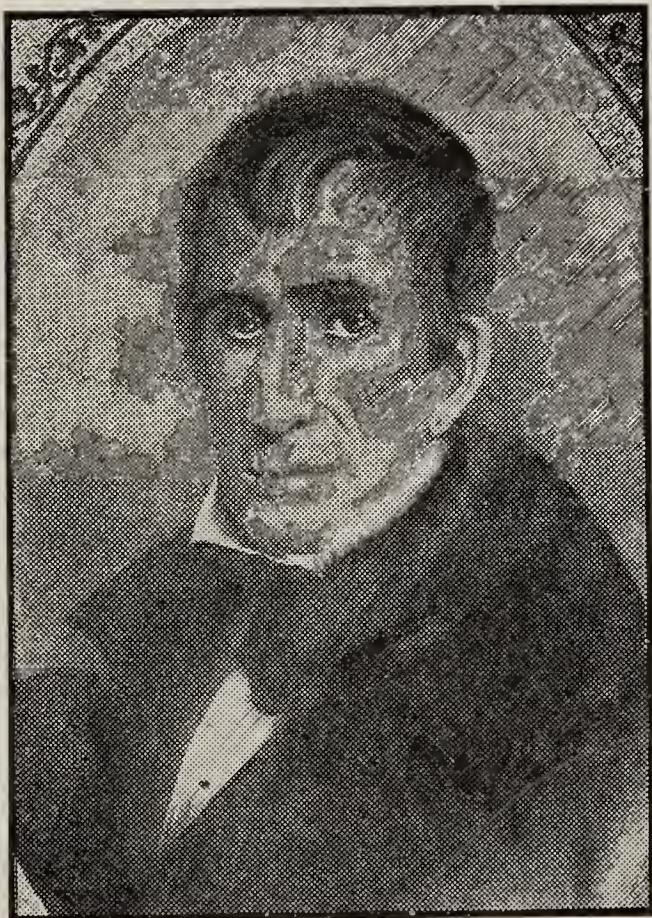


army placed under the command of General Wayne, who was appointed to reclaim the region lost by General Arthur St. Clair.

On the Maumee river the Indians were encountered in large numbers, estimated at 2,000, and the battle ensuing was long and bloody, but they were so badly defeated that they pleaded for peace. Here Harrison's service was so valuable and conspicuous he was promoted to the rank of Captain and given command at Fort Washington.

The British posts in the Northwest about this time were surrendered and he was occupied in supplying them. While thus engaged he married a Miss Symes, a daughter of John Cleaves Symes, a frontier resident on the Maumee.

In 1797 Captain Harrison resigned his commission in the army and was appointed Secretary of the Northwest Territory, and ex-officio Lieutenant-Governor, General St. Clair being Governor. At that time no one could purchase tracts of land in less quantity than 4,000 acres, and Harrison, in spite of violent opposition, had the law rescinded



WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON.

for the benefit of poor settlers who had hitherto to purchase their lands second-handed, often at exorbitant prices.

In 1800 the Northwest Territory was divided, the eastern portion embraced in the State of Ohio, and called the Territory of Ohio; and the western portion, including that region which is now the States of Indiana, Michigan, Illinois and Wisconsin, but then called Indiana Territory. Harrison, then at the age of twenty-seven, was appointed Governor of Indiana Territory, and immediately after also Governor of Upper Louisiana by John Adams, President. When he was appointed Governor there were but three white settlements embraced in his jurisdiction, one on the Ohio river at the Falls, Vincennes on the Wabash, and a French settlement on the Kaskaskia river. He arrived at his seat of government, Vincennes, January, 1801, his Secretary, John Gibson, having preceded him and entered upon the formation of a Territorial Government.

Governor Harrison's services were invaluable to the Washington Government, and during his administration, thirteen treaties were made with the Indians, and all of them were confirmed by Congress. His administration had been so clean and satisfactory to the powers that be, that he received reappointments by Jefferson and Madison.

During Governor Harrison's administration of the Territory, that which gave him the most renown was the victory he gained over the Indian Confederacy, headed by Tecumseh and his brother Ollimacheca, the Prophet, at the battle of Tippecanoe, which occurred November 7, 1811,\* about seventy-nine miles above Vincennes near the site of LaFayette.

---

\* The episode leading up to this battle will be found related in the chapter relating to Harrison's mansion.



In 1812 he was appointed by President Madison Commander-in-Chief of the Northwestern army, with orders to retake Detroit, which had recently ignominiously been surrendered by General Hull. Upon this appointment he resigned the office of Governor and set about raising an army to accomplish his orders. Before he was ready to advance, General Winchester had taken the initiative against orders, and was defeated, with a loss of his whole command, in killed and captured, amounting to about 1,000 men.

This premature attack and disaster following it delayed the advance on Detroit, and on account of the swamps to be crossed to reach it, General Harrison, who had now been appointed Commander-in-Chief of the army, suggested that the attack be delayed until the winter, or, if sooner, by water, which was done; and on the 10th of September, Commander Perry, with his gallant squadron, met the British fleet and at the close of a heroic struggle found the American navy victorious. General Harrison now crossed the lake, took possession of Sandwich, the British retreating before him, and sent a brigade which seized Detroit. The British and Indian allies retreated, but made a stand on the banks of the Thames river, but this was of short duration, and General Proctor's forces surrendered; but the Indians fought longer, before retreating, leaving their great Chief, Tecumseh, slain on the battlefield. This great battle gave peace to the Northwestern frontier, victory again perching on American arms, and Harrison receiving the plaudits of his countrymen.

Soon after this, owing to want of harmony between the Secretary of War and himself, General Harrison resigned



his commission, much to the regret of President Madison. He, however, remained in his country's service as commissioner, to treat with the Indians, until 1816, when he was chosen a Representative to Congress from Ohio. Charges having been made, by some of his enemies, of corruption, in relation to the commissariat of the army, a committee of investigation was appointed, who completely vindicated his character, and paid a high compliment to his patriotism, honesty and devotion to public service. In 1819 he was elected to the United States Senate from Ohio, where he ably served his State. In 1828 President John Quincy Adams appointed him Minister of the Republic of Colombia, but upon the inauguration of General Jackson, a bitter foe of Harrison, in 1829, General Harrison was recalled, when he returned to private life at North Bend, Ohio.

General Harrison was accused of being pro-slavery, but he replied to the accusation as follows :

“From my earliest youth, and to the present moment, I have been an ardent friend of human liberty. At the age of eighteen I became a member of an abolition society established at Richmond, Va., the object of which was to ameliorate the condition of slaves and procure their freedom by every legal means. The obligations which I then came under I have faithfully performed. I have been the means of liberating many slaves, but never placed one in bondage. I was the first person to introduce into Congress a proposition that all the country above Missouri should never have slavery admitted into it.”

In 1836 the friends of General Harrison advocated his claims for the presidency, but the opposition to the de-

mocracy was divided and Martin Van Buren was elected; but at the close of Van Buren's administration General Harrison was the unanimous choice of the Whig party, and he was triumphantly elected to the presidency. He entered upon his duties with the brightest prospects of a successful administration, having selected an able Cabinet, with Daniel Webster as Secretary of State; but in one short month he was stricken with pleurisy, and after a brief illness he died April 4, 1841, honored and beloved by his countrymen. His remains were interred at North Bend, Ohio.

#### GENERAL ZACHARY TAYLOR.

President Zachary Taylor, tradition has it, once lived here early in the nineteenth century, and occupied the Benjamin Parke cottage, just south of Governor Harrison's residence, corner Hart and Water streets, and it may have been true, as he is said to have participated in the battle of Tippecanoe. History\* tells that he was stationed at Fort Harrison (Terre Haute) in 1812.

He was born in Virginia, but came to Kentucky in his infancy, his father settling on a farm near Louisville. His ancestry were distinguished patriots. He was the grandson of Zachariah Taylor, son of James Taylor, the second, who was born in 1674, and died in 1729. His grandfather's sister, Frances Taylor, was the mother of President James Madison, as the writer learns from his family tree of genealogy in his possession. He received such education as the country schools afforded, but early developed a patriotic feeling and a desire to fight the Indians, who

---

\* Abbott's History Presidents United States, p. 300.

were often making raids into the State. His father, Richard Taylor, succeeded in getting him a commission as Lieutenant in the United States Army. He was first stationed in New Orleans. Having risen to the office of Captain, he was assigned to Fort Harrison, a fort General Harrison had hastily constructed while on his way (at Terre Haute) to the Prophet's town, near Lafayette, to engage the head



GENERAL ZACHARY TAYLOR.

of Tecumseh's confederacy and overthrow it. The year following the building of the fort it was attacked by Indians, but Captain Taylor nobly defended his position and beat back his assailants; and for his gallant conduct was promoted to the office of Major. At the termination of the war with England the army was curtailed, and he was reduced in office

to that of Captain, when he resigned. But he was restored to his majorship and sent to Fort Crawford, on Fox River, which empties into Green Bay. During his service there he was appointed Colonel, and subsequently participated in the Black Hawk War, one episode of which is worth recording. He had in his force a large number of militia who had volunteered for service in Illinois only—



Black Hawk having crossed Rock River, then supposed to be the dividing line of the State—and they declined to go further, and a council of war was held; many speeches were made, when finally Taylor was called on for his opinion. He gravely rose and said: “Gentlemen and fellow-citizens, the word has been passed on to me from Washington to follow Black Hawk, and to take you with me as soldiers. I mean to do both. There are the flatboats drawn up on the shore; there are Uncle Sam’s men drawn up behind you on the prairie.” The argument was conclusive, and, in a few hours, they were all across the river and in hot pursuit of their foe.

In 1836 he was sent to Florida to assist in subduing the Seminoles. The war was long and bloody, but he came out conqueror. In May, 1838, he was commissioned General. After two years of hard, wearisome service in the Everglades, and at his request, he obtained a command embracing Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Georgia, with headquarters at Fort Jessup, in Louisiana, in 1840. In the spring of 1845 Congress passed the act annexing Texas to the Union. This brought on the war with Mexico over a boundary question, and General Taylor was called into active service. The first serious encounter with the Mexicans was in the battle of Palo Alto, when he met an army of 3,000, who were aiding an attack on Fort Brown. With a less number Taylor, after a day’s battle, forced the enemy to retire, but they took up a position three miles distant, at a place called Resaca de la Palma. Here he won another victory, and Fort Brown was relieved. After these battles the title of Brevet Major-General was conferred on him. His next victory was at Monterey, where the Mexi-

can General, Ampudia, capitulated after severe fighting. General Scott, shortly after this, assumed command of all the American forces in Mexico, and Taylor was left at Monterey with only about 5,000 troops for the garrisoning of the surrounding posts. But in February this army was raised to 6,000 and a forward movement made. Fifty miles south of Monterey he received word that Santa Anna was advancing on him, near the village of Buena Vista, with 20,000 troops. Santa Anna sent an aide with a flag of truce, demanding his surrender. General Taylor's reply was, "General Taylor never surrenders;" and, as he rode along his ranks, he said: "I intend to stand here not only so long as a man remains, but so long as a piece of a man is left." The battle then commenced, February 22, 1847, and lasted ten hours. The night following the enemy retreated. American loss, 700 in killed and wounded; Mexicans, 2,000.

These battles of Palo Alto, Resaca de la Palma, Monterey and Buena Vista brought General Taylor imperishable renown, and such popularity that he was given the presidential chair in 1850 by a grateful people; but he prematurely died in July of the same year. His remains were interred at Frankfort, Ky.

#### TECUMSEH.

The war chief, Tecumseh, may well be rated as one of the foremost leaders of his race. He was a chief actor on battlefields from Louisiana to Canada, and his fame was coeval with the Northwestern country. His warwhoop was as magic to his fellow-countrymen who dared to follow where he led. He was a member of the Shawnee tribe, and

tradition gives the coast of the Gulf of Mexico as the home of his ancestry; but in the evolution of time the tribe became denizens in the Lake Region, at the head of the Wabash River. In the early exploration and settlement of this part of the Western Continent his tribe was found the most implacable the whites had to contend with. They, in many ways, seemed to be in advance of the surrounding Indians, and their skill and strategy were superior in battle, and foes not easily placated in peace or conquered in war.

Nothing of Tecumseh's boyhood is known, nor how soon he visited the village Che-pe-ko-ke, of the Pinkeshaws; but the probability is that it was at an early day, as this was a large trading post. His brother, the Prophet, exercised such influence over the tribes in this region, in a spiritual way, that Tecumseh gained additional favor thereby, and occupied as high a position in the temporal affairs of the adjacent tribes as the Prophet did in spiritual matters. Being thus exalted with his race, he sought to form a confederation of all the tribes with a view of beating back the encroachments of the whites and annulling the treaties that had been made, from time to time, and especially those entered into between Governor Harrison and themselves. His plans were deep-laid ones, and, had a consolidation of the tribes, North and South, been consummated before the Prophet's forces were attacked, in his absence on his federating mission, disaster might have occurred to the whites in all this country.

His visit to General Harrison, in the summer of 1811, on which occasion he denied the right of the separate tribes to make treaties, and intimated that they were held to be void by the Indians, and that they would not live up to



them, convinced Harrison of his danger, and he immediately commenced perfecting plans to circumvent Tecumseh and the Prophet. Having received additional troops in the fall of 1811, he started for the Prophet's headquarters, up the Wabash, determined to force a settlement, by treaty or battle. The result of this campaign was the battle of Tippecanoe, on November 7, when the Prophet's and Tecumseh's power was broken, and the proposed alliances with other tribes in the South were frustrated. After this disaster Tecumseh returned to his tribe in the northern part of the State, but the prestige of his warriors, left after the battle, was gone, and his scheme of confederation was abandoned; but for several years afterward he gave trouble to adjacent settlements. Being disgusted, he quitted the northern part of the State, and allied himself to the tribes in Michigan, and joined hands with the English, whose headquarters were at Detroit.

After Commodore Perry's notable victory over the British fleet in a naval battle on Lake Erie, on the 10th of September, 1814, General Harrison crossed the lake, took possession of Sandwich, the British forces retreating, Proctor leading the English and Tecumseh the Indians. They made a stubborn stand on the banks of the River Raisin, but the battle was short and decisive, Proctor surrendering the English forces, but the Indians, under Tecumseh, retreated; but, after a little longer fighting, they fled, leaving their chief slain on the field.

It seems the irony of fate that the two greatest Indian warriors of the time, the Prophet and Tecumseh, his brother, should meet complete disaster under the leadership of General William Henry Harrison. The question

who killed Tecumseh has ever been an unsolved conundrum.

Among the Kentucky troops at the battle when he was killed was Colonel Richard M. Johnson, who claimed to have been the slayer of the great Indian hero; but many of his comrades doubted his claim, and said that the fight was so fast and furious, of the pell-mell fashion, that it would have been impossible to positively know the soldier who did the deed. The writer knew well and conversed with an intelligent gentleman who was engaged in the battle who doubted the accuracy of Johnson's claim. Nevertheless he got the credit of it, and was elevated to the vice-presidency, by the euphonious refrain, during the canvass of the presidential election, of "Rumpsy-dumpsy, Old Dick Johnson killed Tecumseh." The writer heard often the catchy phrase in his boyhood days, which no doubt exercised a potent influence upon many voters.

In after years similar phrases, as "Tippecanoe and Tyler too" and "Old Rough and Ready," were made to do good service in presidential campaigns.

Had Tecumseh been surrounded by other environments, where education and civilization exert noble and elevating influences, he might have been a benefactor to his race and his memory cherished coeval with time. He was astute, brave, broad in intellect, and not devoid of noble impulses. As it is, he was known to his race only as a brave and heroic leader, and to the white man as a dauntless, intrepid, and astute warrior, fitly ranking with Osceola, Black Hawk and other famed Indians. And yet, if his memory is perpetuated, it must be by his foes who will not withhold such praise as is justly due him.

## JOHN DUFFIELD HAY.

The subject of this sketch was a notable character in old Vincennes. He was born in Dauphin County, Pennsylvania, in 1775; settled in this town in 1803, and engaged in the mercantile business, which he continued until he died, November 5, 1840. He was married in 1804 to Miss Sarah Harvey, of Maryland. In 1813 he was postmaster of Vincennes, and Recorder of the County of Knox. On January 29, 1814, he met the misfortune of having his house and store burned, with all the records of the Recorder's office, the postoffice, and three children. In this conflagration, besides his family loss, goods and valuables to the amount of \$20,000 were consumed. To make the disaster more horrible, an explosion of three hundred pounds of gunpowder in the cellar occurred, killing one man and injuring another so that he subsequently died of his injuries, and doing great damage to adjacent property.

He was a volunteer captain in the army with Governor Harrison, and was aide-de-camp to the commander-in-chief in 1812. He was in the battle of Tippecanoe, and I will here record a letter written by him just after his return home from the battle, as a historical contribution of that memorable event. It was written to his father, Colonel William Hay, of Dauphin County, Pennsylvania:

“Vincennes, November 20, 1811.

“Dear Father—On the 15th of October last I was ordered to join a troop of cavalry to which I belonged. It was then with the army on its march against the hostile Indians up the Wabash. I set out, and in three days overtook the army



on the 21st at Fort Harrison, eighty miles north of this place. Eight days after my arrival the army took up the line of march, and on the 6th day of this month we got in sight of the Prophet's town. The Indians, seeing our approach, sent out a flag of truce, and begged of the Governor, who was commander-in-chief, to retire to a creek one-half mile back, and they would meet him in council the next day. He did so, and we encamped for the night on the ground which they had pointed out. Our troops consisted of one regiment of United States troops, 450 strong; three troops of horse, amounting to 120 men; two companies of mounted riflemen and about 300 militia on foot. The enemy were said to be 700 warriors. The night was dark and rainy. At half past four in the morning the Indians commenced their attack by shooting down our sentinels, after which they raised the warwhoop and made a violent onset; they attempted to force our lines. Our men one and all behaved with great spirit. The battle lasted four hours and five minutes. It is said to be the hardest battle that has been fought since the revolution. We had fifty-four men killed and 125 wounded, together with a great many horses. During the action the Indians drove off forty-six head of beef cattle, which was all we had. At daylight the Indians retreated and left us to bury our dead and to take care of the wounded, which took up a whole day. We had the satisfaction of finding in and around our camp fifty-four Indians killed and saw trails of blood where a great number had been carried off during the action. On the 8th we reconnoitered the town of the Indians and found they had fled and left an immense quantity of corn, beans, kettles, guns, and a variety of other things, all of which

we destroyed, except what was necessary for the army. We then burned the town, which consisted of about two hundred houses. On the 9th we took up the line of march for home, and arrived at this place on the 17th, safe, and sound, and unhurt.

“I never in my life felt so grateful to Providence as the morning after the battle. A great many balls passed very near me; they appeared to be like a shower of hail. Several men were shot about me and a great many of my intimate acquaintances were killed on the spot. The yells of the savages and the groans of the dying were truly distressing.

“I am in haste, our town is quite in a bustle and I have not time to add more. JOHN D. HAY.”

When the Presbyterian Church was organized here in 1806 he became one of its first elders.

Subsequent to the loss of his children he was blessed with three other children—Mary Ann, born in 1815, who married Doctor Joseph Maddox, a physician of Vincennes, each of whom died early; Nancy Ann, born in 1817, married John W. Maddox, the latter a prominent merchant (succeeding his father-in-law) and a stanch church member, dying in March, 1879; and George Duffield Hay, who was a prominent merchant in Vincennes many years, but who removed to Philadelphia, where he died in September, 1895, leaving one son, Henry Gurley Hay, a prominent banker and financier of Cheyenne, Wyo. The relict of Mr. Maddox died in February, 1902, aged eighty-five years, in Chester, Pa., leaving only one daughter, Mrs. Sarah Hay Vance, relict of the late Reverend Joseph Vance (who was

a worthy pastor of Vincennes Presbyterian Church for many years), now a resident of Cheyenne, Wyo.

The old Hay building stood on the corner of First and Main streets, the site of the old American Hotel, which gave way to the La Plante Hotel of today.

#### NATHANIEL EWING.

Nathaniel Ewing, the subject of this sketch, was born April 10, 1772, in Pennsylvania. His grandfather, Nathaniel Ewing, was born in Colerain County, Ireland, and emigrated to America to escape persecution in 1725. His father emigrated to Pennsylvania and died there in 1785. His son, Nathaniel Ewing, followed farming and trading on the Ohio and Wabash rivers, and his first trip to Vincennes, with a pirogue loaded with apples, salt, etc., was made in 1788, when he was only sixteen years old, and he finally settled here in 1807, having received the appointment of Receiver of the Land Office at this place, which office he efficiently held through several administrations, and until the year 1824.

He was elected president of the first bank established in Vincennes. It was a private institution, but, subsequently, it was adopted with four other banks, and given a charter by the Legislature. Like many similar institutions in the early days of the State, this bank went into liquidation in 1824.

Mr. Ewing was engaged, during his early career, in politics, having been elected to the Legislature, and was a member when the Territory became a State in 1816. In the controversy upon the slavery question, which was then



much discussed, he espoused the cause of freedom. After retirement from office, in 1824, to his farm, Mont Clair, he spent the remainder of his days quietly until his death, August 6, 1846.



NATHANIEL EWING.

Mr. Ewing was a notable figure in business and social life here, in the first years of the past century, and occupied

a leading position as a successful financier. He married Miss Ann Breeding on October 1, 1793. Eight children were the result of the union. His eldest daughter, Mary, married Doctor William Carr Lane, of St. Louis; Caroline married Doctor Geo. W. Mears, who settled at Indianapolis; Rachel, who married Daniel Jencks, of Terre Haute; Harriet married James Farrington, of Terre Haute, and Sarah married the Honorable John Law, who was a prominent attorney and member of Congress from this town. His sons were George W. Ewing, who became a prominent attorney and banker; William L. Ewing, a merchant, who, in early life, emigrated to St. Louis, and became a prominent and successful financier; and James, who occupied the old family mansion until his death. He was the grandfather of our fellow-citizen, the Honorable W. L. Ewing, ex-Mayor of St. Louis, but now occupying, during the summer months, the old family residence, Mont Clair, which has been in possession of the family for nearly a century. It is situated four miles east of the city, is a most beautiful suburban home, and gains in picturesque beauty under the skillful hand of its present occupant, with the passing years, and presents an ideal site, embowered with forest trees and carpeted with swards of blue grass for picnicing in the summer days.

The patriarch of the family lies entombed in the city cemetery, but is still represented by thrifty and honored generations.

## NICHOLAS SMITH.

One of the most notable persons the writer became acquainted with when he came to Vincennes, more than half a century ago, was the subject of this brief sketch. He was born in New Jersey in September, 1790, and located in Vincennes in 1817, engaging in the hardware and tinning business, preferring this place to either Cincinnati or St. Louis as one for successful business. His first visit to Cincinnati was about 1810, but he returned East; finally settling in Vincennes. Soon after coming here he was married to Miss Hannah Foster, of Jefferson County, this State. Mr. Smith combined with his business trading between this place and New Orleans. He died in 1871, leaving six children—Foster and Charles, who engaged in business in Terre Haute; Parmelia, Sarah, John, and Edward H. remaining at the old homestead, corner of Fifth and Main streets, built in the year 1833.

Mr. Smith was left an orphan at two years of age, and when little more than a youth started out in the world to seek his fortune. The West then offered inducements to energetic young men, and he soon found himself in the business whirl of life. Being a genial man, of good habits, and having an extraordinarily retentive memory, success followed his business ventures. His sons followed his calling in Terre Haute and Vincennes, and have built up a flourishing and profitable trade, retaining the old firm name of fifty years ago of N. Smith & Sons, reminding one of the names of firms seen in the Eastern cities, where the style of them is the same as they were a hundred or more years ago, and where the sons have followed closely



in the footsteps of their fathers and grandfathers. Such families are a credit to their race and city in building it up and giving character and prosperity to its general business.

#### JOHN WISE.

Among the honored old citizens of Vincennes must be numbered Mr. John Wise, born in October, 1796, who was conspicuous as an active business man for more than fifty years. He was a native of Pennsylvania and of staunch, patriotic German descent. His mother lost part of her scalp in an Indian raid upon the family settlement. His father and mother dying the same day, Mr. Wise, being the eldest, was left to care for the minor children. He came to Vincennes in 1816, and engaged in the saddlery business, and as he



JOHN WISE, SR.

prospered he sent, annually, for a member of the family left at the old homestead, until all were brought here. His business enlarged, and soon he became contractor for carrying the United States mails from Lou-



isville, Ky., to St. Louis, Mo., and, following that, he entered into merchandizing with his younger brothers, Samuel and William, under the firm name of J. S. & W. J. Wise, and added to their business pork packing, mostly for the Southern trade, by means of flatboats, and afterward steamboats in the New Orleans trade. Mr. Wise married Miss Hannah McCall, of Kentucky; the fruit of this union being Mary, who married a merchant, Mr. Jedediah Heberd, and Arabella, who married R. J. McKinney, who became a successful banker and Mayor of the city during his career, each surviving their husbands to the present time. Mr. Wise purchased the Judge Benjamin Park resi-



PARK-WISE RESIDENCE, SAID TO HAVE BEEN BUILT IN 1815.



dence, situated just below the Harrison mansion, on the river, and which, it is said, was built the same year as the latter. He bought it in the earliest years of the past century, and resided in it until his death in 1884. This residence, in former days, was a picturesque, as well as a stately-looking, building, and is one of the few old houses left in the city of a former age. Mrs. Schultz, a florist, now ornaments the old garden with beds of beautiful flowers—fit tribute, as if in memory of the dead but glorious past; but the building's corridors have ceased to echo back the happy voices once vocal in their labyrinths.

*Built  
1816*

Mr. Wise was a broad, enterprising business man, and was honored and respected by all who knew him. He was wise enough, as he prospered, to enter large tracts of public lands, and left to his heirs many valuable farms in this and adjoining counties. He died at the good old age of eighty-eight years.

The Wise family were all notable, stanch business men, and some of their worthy descendants still reside in the city.

#### SAMUEL JUDAH.

Mr. Samuel Judah settled in Vincennes early in the nineteenth century, and assiduously devoted himself to the practice of law, and must be classed as one of its older American citizens. He early rose to distinction as a learned and astute attorney, and not many suits were instituted in which he did not either represent the plaintiff or defendant. But his fame as a successful lawyer was not altogether local, as clients from other States sought his legal opinions. But, probably, the greatest triumph he ever



achieved in forensic debate was in the case of The University of Vincennes vs. the State of Indiana, and it is very doubtful if this institution would be now in existence had it not been for his shrewdness, indomitable energy and



SAMUEL JUDAH.

his excellent attainments in legal lore. The State had arbitrarily, and without legal right, sold the lands belonging to the University, and had appropriated the proceeds of the sales. Suit could not be instituted against the State

for the recovery of the property without the permission of the Legislature. Mr. Judah procured the passage of a bill granting this authority, the suit was brought in Marion County, and the trial resulted in a verdict for the University. An appeal was taken by the State to the Supreme Court, which reversed the verdict of the lower court. Mr. Judah then appealed the case to the Supreme Court of the United States. In this last tribunal he was victorious. Before this the State tried to show, by various ways and schemes, that the charter of the University had lapsed, and employed six of the most noted members of the Indiana bar to accomplish this result; but they were defeated on every point. This contest presented the most crucial test of Mr. Judah's legal abilities possible, and he emerged from it with the highest honors. He was learned outside of the law, and maintained his love for science and the classics during his long career. He was a man of aesthetic tastes, as was manifested in his efforts to advance agriculture and floriculture. Having selected and purchased a piece of land two miles east of the town, susceptible topographically of rare possibilities in art improvement, he proceeded to lay the foundation for a beautiful suburban home of rare picturesqueness. He not only preserved the forests in their nascent state, but added to their stock trees and shrubs from other localities. Happily the homestead has been kept intact by his son, the Honorable Noble B. Judah, a prominent attorney of Chicago, under whose skillful and vigilant eye it has been transformed into one of the most beautiful and picturesque country residences in the county.

Mr. Judah was born in the City of New York in 1798, and was of distinguished parents, who emigrated to America in 1750, and espoused the cause of the patriots in the Revolution. He settled in Vincennes in 1818, and was married to Miss Harriet Brandon, of Corydon, Ind., in 1825. He was honored by the citizens of Knox County with a seat in the Legislature in 1828, 1836-38-39 and 1840. He died at Vincennes in 1869. Mrs. Judah's family was no less distinguished than her husband's, having sprung from patriotic revolutionary ancestors. Mr. Judah had six children to arrive at maturity, to wit: Caroline, the wife of Dr. John R. Mantel; Catherine, the wife of General Lazarus Noble, both now deceased, and the present living ones—Alice, the widow of the late Franklin Clarke; Samuel B., Deputy Internal Revenue Collector for this district; John M., a prominent attorney of Indianapolis, and Noble B., a distinguished attorney and politician of Chicago.

#### JEREMIAH L. COLEMAN.

One among the early settlers in Vincennes, who helped to build it up, is the subject of this sketch.

He was born in England in 1788, and, emigrating to this country, landed in Vincennes in 1811. He was a trader, and engaged in general merchandizing, and at first bought his goods at Pittsburgh and brought them here by boat. With his first stock of goods he started with a crew who, after bringing the boat up the Wabash River as far as the mouth of Embarrass River, hearing of the battle of Tippecanoe, after taking it up that stream a few miles,



left Mr. Coleman and fled to Vincennes through fear of the Indians.

While on one of his trading trips to Pittsburgh after goods he married Miss Elizabeth Nichols, and brought her to his Western home. Mr. Coleman was a man of remarkable genius and skill, and soon turned his attention to various kinds of business. Among others was that of a millwright, and he built a mill, probably the first in the town, about where the present gas works stand, and it was there as late as 1855. About the time Mr. Coleman abandoned milling he built a little steamer and named it after his daughter Amanda, who became the wife of our worthy fellow-citizen, Mr. Charles Methesie, and is yet living. His residence, when the writer knew him, was a two-story frame house that stood on Main street, adjoining the city hall lot, where the drug store of H. Watjen now stands.

Several brothers came to this place about the same time Mr. Coleman did, and William, a prominent man, married the late William Burtch's sister; but he was lost with a trading boat of produce between Vincennes and New Orleans, leaving a wife and daughter, the latter an estimable lady, the present Mrs. Caroline Lusk. Her widowed mother married Captain John D. Martin, who held many official positions during the early years of Territorial Government of Indiana.

Besides Mrs. Methesie, Mr. Coleman leaves behind him, yet living, Captain John T. Coleman, who valiantly answered his country's call during the early part of the Civil War, and served through it. During his service he contracted a disease from which he is disabled from active business.

Mr. Jeremiah L. Coleman died February 5, 1865, leaving behind him a spotless record for honesty and good citizenship.

#### JOHN LAW.

Among the bright young New Englanders who migrated to the West in the early part of the nineteenth century was the late Judge John Law, who became a resident of Vincennes in 1817. The acquisition of the great Northwest Territory and the establishment of its capital here drew some of the brainiest, best educated men from their Eastern homes to this town. Contention for fame and honor produced a rivalry worthy of emulation, and, as the fittest survive competition only, the meed of praise is due the subject of this sketch, since he became the recipient of public favors seldom exceeded by popular favor. His natural and legal ability, his genial disposition, suavity of manner, ready wit and bonhomie made him a general favorite with the people, the source of all power; no wonder, then, that he was honored by his fellow-citizens. His legal lore soon elevated him to the bench, where he presided with dignity and rare discrimination in balancing the scales of justice.

He was United States Commissioner to adjust land titles in this district, but never filled the office of Receiver of Public Moneys for this land district, as some have asserted, as will be seen from the list of said officers given elsewhere.

The manifest evidences of statesmanship in due time caused his elevation to Congress from this district; he was

subsequently elected to the same office and proved himself a valuable and influential member. He married Miss Sarah Ewing, daughter of Honorable Nathaniel Ewing. In later life he removed to Evansville and died there, October 7, 1873.

Judge Law was a fluent and graceful writer and gained a national reputation for his contributions to the Colonial history of the Territory of Indiana, and especially of this city. His son, the Honorable Edward Law, of Evansville, survives the father.

#### WILLIAM BURTCHE.

In relation to the early settlers of Vincennes, no one is more fruitful of interesting incidents than the subject of this sketch. He was born in Rutland, Vt., in 1793, and losing his father, he being then the head of the family, left in indigent circumstances, determined to seek his fortune in the great West, and arrived with his mother and several sisters and a brother in Cincinnati, O., in 1811. The Indian War detained him there until 1814, when he and family arrived in Vincennes.

Mr. Burtche was small of stature, but was remarkably versatile in intellect, and although his education was limited, he early demonstrated his aptitude in the transaction of business. Starting with a very small capital, his attention to business and strict integrity and thrift soon placed him in the front rank of the business men of the town. But in a few years his strict attention to business made inroads upon his constitution, and his health giving way he sought respite in the country and built the large, fine residence,



for those days (about 1835) three miles east of the town (now owned by the widow Emison), and a little rural life so restored his health that he returned to his mercantile business, and he then built a fine residence on the half square on the site of Mr. B. Kuhn's residence, corner of Fourth and Buntin streets. Mr. Burtch engaged in trading South, as well as merchandizing, and was soon accounted the wealthiest man in the county. He was public spirited and did as much as any man in the town to advance its general interests, and early became a factor in all that was calculated to elevate the people morally, socially and intellectually. Early he became a member of the Presbyterian Church and was its steadfast supporter; a member of the Board of the Vincennes University, and became its treasurer and held the office until he retired from business on account of his declining years. He was also an officer in the old State Bank of Indiana as long as it existed.

Besides the buildings named he erected a business block at the corner of First and Main streets, opposite the old American Hotel, the present site of the La Plante Hotel. But Mr. Burtch's prosperity failed him in his declining years through the lack of correct methods of his partners in business and loss by the payment of security debts for friends who failed in business, and he died comparatively a poor man.

Mr. Burtch's first wife was Miss Margaret Hanna, by whom he leaves one daughter living, Mrs. Lansing Heberd, of Evansville. By the second wife, Mrs. Eunice Hanna Docker, two daughters survive him, Mrs. Margaret McLaughlin, of Pennsylvania, and Mrs. Laura Lewis, of

Indianapolis. One of his sisters married Mr. William Coleman, the father of Mrs. Caroline Lusk, now residing in this city; he dying, she married Captain John D. Martin. Another sister married Wm. J. Heberd, for a long time a leading merchant of this city. Members of the family still reside here and in Terre Haute.

He died about the year 1880, honored and beloved by all who knew him.

#### ANDREW GARDNER.

About the year 1816, Vincennes received many substantial citizens from the East, they anticipating Horace Greeley's advice, given at a later period, to young men to "go West and grow up with the country"; and Andrew Gardner, the father of our worthy fellow-citizen, Elbridge Gardner, was one of the many enterprising young men to seek a home here at that period, 1816. He was born in Springfield Mass., in 1792, where he learned the cabinet business. He arrived here in advance of his wife, Hanna Gardner, nee Hanna Swift, who was born in Camden, N. J., in 1799.

He began business in a frame building on Third street, near and south of Main, about where 'Thuis' pop establishment now stands. In those days all furniture was made by hand, the undertaker's business being combined with it; and for many years it was a valuable calling.

Mr. Gardner was prominent in business, church and Masonic circles, and the author has often had the pleasure of sitting with him at fraternal gatherings. He was a valuable and stanch member of the Methodist church. When his oldest son, Elbridge, the head of the present

undertaker's establishment of Gardner & Sons, arrived at manhood, the firm was changed to that name, and the father in a few years retired from business on account of advanced age. He died during the year 1860, his wife preceding him a few years to her resting place in the city cemetery. Andrew Gardner was honored and loved by all who knew him.

#### LEWIS L. WATSON.

The recent death of Mr. Watson tells the living that one more link in the chain that connects the past long gone to the present has been broken, leaving behind only two living persons in this city born as early as 1810, Mr. Vital Bouchie and Mrs. Elizabeth Andre.

Mr. Watson was born April 13, 1809, in the village of Vincennes; his career has been a checkered one, but his tireless energy and business foresight have served him well and always kept him advancing to the front. In his youthful days he and Mr. Bouchie footed it to St. Louis and became apprentices to the tailoring business. In after years he returned to Vincennes and, forming a partnership with the late Samuel R. Dunn, opened a tailoring establishment.

He married Miss Lydia Fellows, daughter of Captain Louis Fellows, who built the large grist and sawmill called the White Mill, on the site of the west end of Harrison Park. A distillery was subsequently attached to it. He continued in the tailoring business until 1849.

Mr. Watson filled many offices of trust. He received the appointment under President Taylor of Postmaster at this place in 1849, and held the same until 1853, when he received the appointment of collector, at the dam of the



Wabash Navigation Company at the grand rapids. He subsequently served as passenger conductor of the E. & T. H. R. R. Co., after which he became their agent at Vincennes. While acting in this capacity he and the late Charles Dawes conducted a lumber yard. Leaving this business he became fuel agent of the O. & M. R. R., which place he resigned to commence hotel business with the late Captain Isaac Mass, and subsequently built the Union Depot hotel, which is still conducted by his son, Mr. Edward Watson. Some years ago he retired from active business and died recently at the good old age of 93 years, dying in May, 1902.

Mr. Watson left behind him six living children: Mrs. Jane Reynolds, Mr. Edward Watson and Mrs. Ruth Davenport, of this city; Mrs. Ida McDonald, of New York; Mr. William Watson, of Aurora, Ill., and Mr. Robert Watson, of Terre Haute. The deceased were Samuel, of Indianapolis, and Mrs. Laura Heinly, Danville, Ill.

#### JOHN MOORE.

One of the early settlers of Vincennes was the Honorable John Moore. He was a native of Virginia and born in the town of Staunton in the year 1788. At an early age he became a citizen of Vincennes and may have participated in Harrison's campaign against the Prophet at the battle of Tippecanoe, but there seems to be no positive evidence existing to that effect; the records of the Territorial Executive proceedings show, however, that on May 16, 1812, he was appointed an ensign in the first regiment of the Indiana militia. After his service in the Territorial Army he assumed the occupation of contractor and builder

and he had much to do with the erection of the old courthouse, town hall, Episcopal church, and many others, besides his own large brick residence, now one of the oldest buildings in the city. He filled many offices of trust, having been Judge of the first Probate Court, President of the Board of Trustees of the Borough from 1820 to 1823, was a director in the Vincennes branch of the old State Bank of Indiana, and filled other positions of trust in the city with ability and to the satisfaction of his constituents. He received the appointment of Postmaster at this city under the administration of President Buchanan in 1856, and served until his successor was appointed in 1861.

He died December 23, 1864, leaving his consort and two children, yet living, Mrs. Ella Smith, wife of Mr. E. H. Smith, a worthy gentleman of this city, and Mrs. W. B. Chadwick, of Chester, Pa.

#### CYRUS McCracken Allen.

In commencing to write of Old Vincennes it was intended to deal with matters occurring only previous to the latter half of the nineteenth century, but as a link should be left between Old and New Vincennes, so that the thread between the past and present may be taken up by some future historian, the writer knows of no fitter character to perform that office than the subject of this sketch, and his name will be included in the present volume.

Cyrus McCracken Allen was born in Clark county, Ky., April 2, 1817, of revolutionary ancestry, and was reared to manhood on his father's farm, when he entered the mercantile business with his elder brother. While thus engaged he commenced the study of law and finally quit his

store to enter the law department of the Transylvania University, Lexington, Ky., from which he graduated about the year 1837, soon after which he married Miss Mary Lander, daughter of Mrs. Nancy Lander, in 1838, proprietress of the Winchester hotel, and set his face westward to find a home. His first stop was at Paoli, Ind., 1841, whence he drifted to Petersburg, Ind. He came to Vincennes in 1844. He soon became a leading member of the bar here. His genial disposition and faculty of forming acquaintances was such that he soon became exceedingly popular with the masses. His knowledge of law was great, and his retentive memory served him to great account, as he could, with alacrity, refer to decisions and adduce points of law, when his conferees for the same matter had to delve into the tomes of the law at the expense of time.



COLONEL C. M. ALLEN.

In the days of the Whig party he was a stanch member of the same, but when the Republican party had its birth, he became affiliated with it, and formed a close alliance with Abraham Lincoln, with whom he was a personal friend; and was one of the first to advocate his nomination



to the Presidency in the old *Vincennes Gazette*; and for which aid and friendship Mr. Lincoln, after he became President, intimated that he could have almost any office desired in his gift; but, with thanks, he declined to accept any. He was twice elected to the Legislature and was elected Speaker of the House one session. He was the nominee of the Republican party in 1866 for Congress, but was defeated by the Honorable W. E. Niblack, the district being overwhelmingly Democratic, and many of the Republicans being away in the army. In the beginning of the Civil War he was a powerful factor in raising the first regiments in this city and county to go to the front.

Having lost his consort, he married Miss Sarah Lander, who survives him. But it was in his relation to the city of Vincennes, in a commercial and material way, that endear him particularly with the people. He was one of the foremost in all the enterprises that promised the city prosperity. He became a factor as advocate in the building of the O. & M., E. & T. H., and Cairo Railroads. What money he made in these enterprises he did not invest in stocks or bonds, but put it into houses, to aid in building up the city. He built the first large brick railway depot at the head of Second, reaching to Water street, and adjacent houses, including the Slinkard residence and some business houses on Second street. Besides these he built the brick cottages on Seventh street, between Perry and Seminary, and the large two-story frame house that once occupied the corner of Sixth and Shelby streets, and others not now remembered by the writer. He purchased the Bonner Mansion, corner Fifth and Main streets. He was several times a member of the city council and aided that body with his

fund of knowledge and matured judgment; was a member of the Board of University Trustees and lent his influence in wresting from the State its ill-gotten funds taken from that institution.

Soon after the close of the war his health commenced failing and he became incompetent to resume his law practice, having given it up for railroad enterprises and politics; and ere long he was numbered with the heroes and worthy men of a past generation.

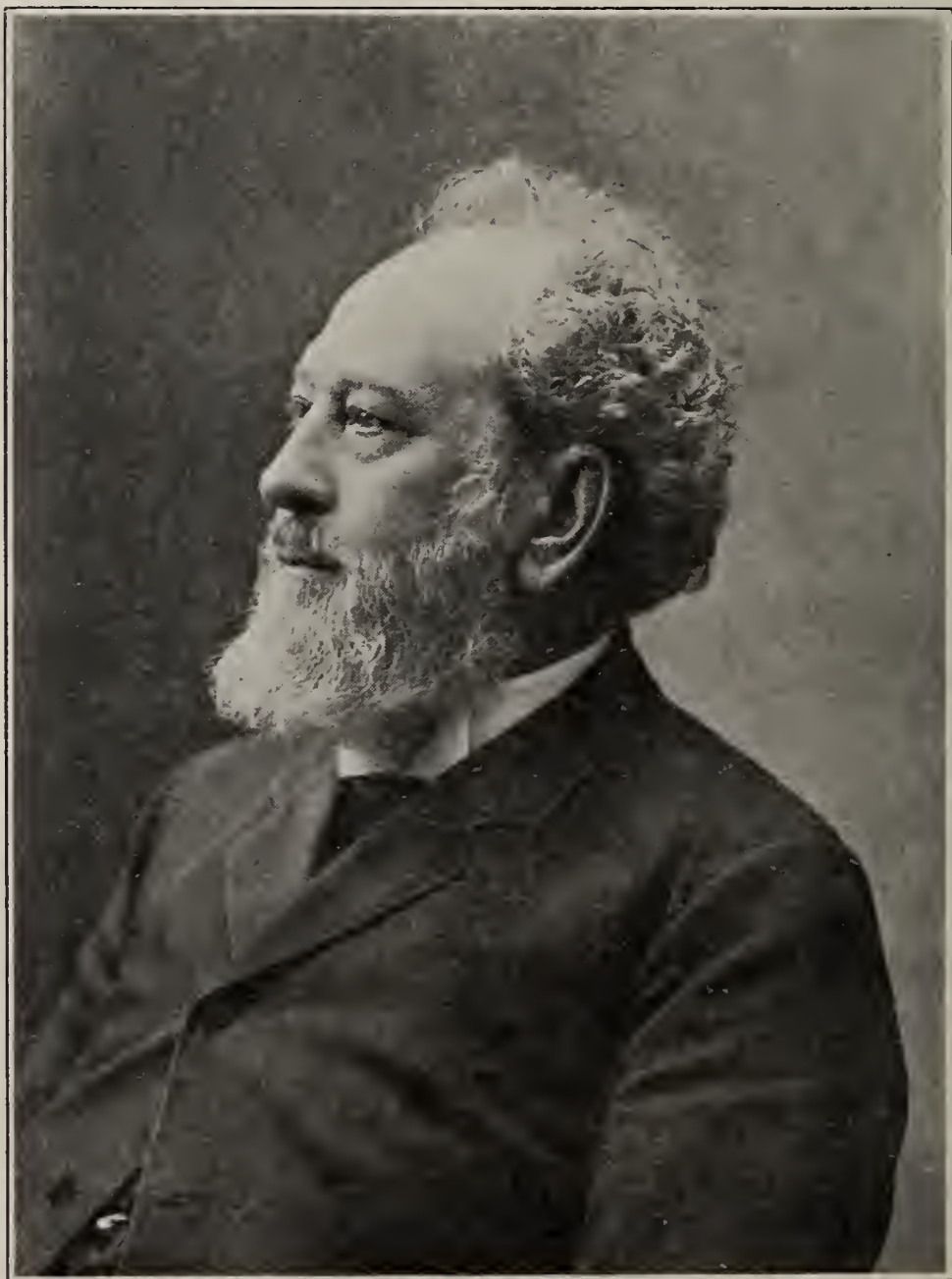
Had all the citizens of Vincennes possessed the push, benevolence and enterprise of Colonel Allen, the city could boast a population of 50,000 people.

Of his children only two survive: Ex-Lieutenant Cyrus M. Allen, Jr., United States Army, and Louis Allen.

#### JOHN FRANCIS BAYARD.

Among the elder citizens living in Vincennes when the writer came here, more than half a century ago, was a French officer once counted among hosts the great Napoleon marshaled in battle array. John Francis Bayard was born under military environments at Grenoble, France, September 11, 1786, where there was an arm of the army. He was one of the soldiers who led the attack on Moscow, Russia, when the French army met a signal disaster. On the retreat he became so exhausted he fell by the wayside and but for following comrades would have perished there. Upon the downfall of his great commander he resigned his commission, emigrated to America in 1817, and finally settled in Vincennes. On July 7, 1823, he married Miss Mary Ann Boneau, a member of a prominent pioneer family, which emigrated here from

Canada. He engaged in merchandizing and during the most of his life lived in a frame house on the corner of Main and Third streets. His wife having inherited much land acquired under the commandant, St. Ange, during



SAMUEL BAYARD.

his reign here, he raised much produce, which, with pelfry taken in his store, he sold in New Orleans and at other points on the Mississippi river. He was successful



in business. He was unobtrusive and modest in manner, but proved a good financier, a faculty that seems to have been bequeathed to his sons. He died rather prematurely, on February 14, 1853, leaving his beloved consort to care for and raise nine children; but she proved equal to the task imposed by Providence. Mrs. Bayard was a remarkable personage, modest, gentle, yet assertive when occasion required; petite in stature, but was fairly active, though afflicted with heart disease for many years, at the age of ninety, at her demise. The impress she and her husband made upon their children, and the town for good, has been quite notable. All of their sons became bankers. The eldest, Samuel, commencing as deputy clerk in the Knox County Circuit Court; but he soon relinquished that office to become a clerk in the Evansville branch of the Old State Bank of Indiana in 1851, and so proficient did he prove, in November of the same year he was promoted to be teller and held the position until the bank went into final liquidation. The old bank having lived its appointed time he was made cashier of the Bank of the State of Indiana, and in 1865, when the national banking system was inaugurated, that bank was reorganized under the name of the Evansville National Bank, which continued under that name until 1885, when it assumed the name of the Old National Bank. Upon the reorganization of this bank Mr. Bayard was promoted to the presidency of it.

Although Mr. Bayard was a self-made man he became one of the most influential citizens of his city. He was a generous donor to all charities and proved a wise counselor and promoter of all public enterprises inaugurated to benefit the town's interest, and when he died, Septem-

ber 3, 1898, he was sincerely mourned and has been since held in remembrance by the general public.

The second son, John F., was a successful banker, but died early in life. Joseph L., now a resident of the city, is the successful president of the prosperous First National Bank of Vincennes.

Of the daughters, Susan married M. A. Pilard; Mary Louise, Prosper Elnere; Adelia, Marcelle D. Lacroix; Eleanor P., Charles Weisert; Mary Elizabeth, Ex-Mayor H. V. Somes, Sr.; Margaret Clotilda, H. S. Cauthorn, Esq., all yet living in this city.



## Chapter IX.

### SOCIETIES—MASONIC.

THE first lodge of Free Masons instituted in the great West was at Vincennes, March 13, 1809, under a dispensation issued by the Grand Lodge of the State of Kentucky. A dispensation was issued August 27, 1807, but owing to untoward circumstances the brethren of the craft here then could not avail themselves of its provisions before the term for which it was issued had expired. A second one, upon application, was granted September 1, 1808, and a lodge was organized under it March 12, 1809. The following members were present at this organization, to wit: Jonathan Taylor, P. M., of Abraham Lodge, No. 8; John Caldwell, W. M., late of Union Lodge, No. 92; Charles Fisher, W. M., late of Brownsville Lodge, No. 60; John Gibson, F. C., of Lancaster, Pa., Lodge; Henry Vanderberg, W. M., Army Traveling Lodge, New York. John Gibson, F. C., was raised to the degree of a Master. The first applicants for membership were Parmenas Beckes, William Prince, John Duffield Hay and Hezekiah Bradley, U. S. A., on the 17th day of March, 1809, when they all took the E. A. degree. To Parmenas Beckes belongs the honor of becoming the first initiated in the Indiana Territory. Unfortunately a little time after this he came to an untimely end through a duel. Captain Beckes heard of a report reflecting on the honor of his step-daughter, a dash-



ing and accomplished girl, emanating from Dr. Scull, and immediately called him to account. The doctor admitted that he had said: "If she is as good as she is pretty, she is a jewel." A duel resulted from the altercation, in which the Captain lost his life. All honor is due our deceased brother for the vindication of the honor of his family! No man dies in a better cause. The false code of honor brought on the sad catastrophe.

The Vincennes Lodge, at its first institution, was numbered 15, under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of the State of Kentucky. When Indiana Territory was organized into a State, the Vincennes Lodge took the initiatory step looking to the organization of a Grand Lodge, and called a meeting at Corydon, July 17, 1817; the local lodge being represented by General W. Johnson. This convention took the initial steps toward the organization of the Grand Lodge, and adjourned to meet again at Madison, January 12, 1818. At the Madison convention this lodge was represented by Captain Benjamin V. Beckes, and upon an organization being effected, the Captain was elected Grand Junior Warden. He surrendered the charter of Vincennes Lodge, No. 15, to the Grand Lodge of the State of Kentucky, and received in its stead the new charter of Vincennes Lodge, No. 1, dated January 13, 1818, under the Grand Lodge of the Territory of Indiana. General W. Johnson was appointed proxy of the Grand Master, by the Grand Lodge, to institute the new Vincennes Lodge, which duty he formally performed on January 1, 1818, installing the following officers: Elihu Stout, W. M.; John B. Drennon, S. W.; John Decker, J. W.; Henry Ruble, Treasurer; Volney T. Bradley, Secretary; Jacob Catt, S. D., and H. Dubois, J. D.

Among the important events connected with the early history of Vincennes Lodge was a visit by the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of the State of Kentucky, Colonel Joseph H. Davies. He presided at the meetings of the lodge on the 18th, 19th and 21st days of September, 1811, and conferred the second and third degrees upon many of the brethren, which work was probably the last lodge work of this distinguished Mason and soldier. He was then in command of a corps of mounted rangers, on their way to help the Indiana troops under Governor Harrison, who was preparing to settle the Indian question with the Prophet, Tecumseh's brother. At the battle of Tippecanoe he was killed in leading a brilliant charge on his savage foes. With him fell Thomas Randolph and Colonel Isaac White, both members of Vincennes Lodge, and for whom the lodge members wore crepe for thirty days in token of their sorrow for their patriot brethren. If the members of the Masonic Lodge distinguished themselves as patriots upon the field of battle in behalf of their country, those in the civil walks of life were none the less famous. General W. Johnson, the founder of Vincennes Lodge, a native of the State of Virginia, was one of the most distinguished members of the Order. He was the first attorney-at-law admitted to practice before the Territorial bar; was the first postmaster of the Northwest Territory, which embraced Indiana, Wisconsin, Illinois and Michigan. He was Auditor of Indiana Territory in 1813; was afterwards commissioned Treasurer, which office he held until a State Government was formed in 1816. He and John Rice Jones compiled the first revision of the laws of Indiana, which was bound and published in

this city by Elihu Stout, who was at the time conducting *The Western Sun*. He was several times elected Legislator and was chairman of a committee to give answer to a petition of the pro-slavery element of the population of the Territory, who memorialized Congress to legalize slavery in the Territory. This committee advised against said grant and the whole subject was then and there buried forever.

Colonel Thomas H. Blake, a member of this lodge, was prominent in military circles, and became a member of Congress, and Alexander Buckner, another member, was Grand Master of the State in 1818, and after emigrating to the State of Missouri he became a member of the United States Senate from that State. John Gibson, another member, was a distinguished citizen and was Secretary, by appointment, at the same time that General Harrison was appointed Governor of the Territory, from the State of Pennsylvania, by Thomas Jefferson. He arrived here in July, 1800, and in the absence of Governor Harrison (who did not reach here until January, 1801), he set about organizing the Territory, it having been created an independent one. He continued his duties until 1812, when he then became Governor, ex-officio, after Harrison's resignation, and held the office until Thomas Posey became Governor in 1813, when he again assumed the duties of Secretary, and held that office until the State was admitted into the Union in 1816. Governor Gibson retired from office with the love and esteem of all the factions then in the Territory, having kept aloof from all entangling alliances that might hinder him from dealing out justice to all citizens alike.



Benjamin Vincennes Beckes, who is said to have been the first native born citizen of this town in 1786, was of American parentage, a soldier at the battle of Tippecanoe, and commanded a company in the Black Hawk War; he was a member several times of the Territorial Legislature, was elected twice as sheriff and was generally popular with the people.

Waller Taylor was elected by the first session of the State Legislature as a United States Senator from Indiana. He was also a Major in Harrison's army at the battle of Tippecanoe. The gallant John Davies and Thomas Randolph, who fell in this battle, were, under the direction of Taylor, buried side by side; and he took a pin from Randolph's bosom, clipped a lock of his hair, and transmitted them to Randolph's wife; he also cut the initials of the dead soldiers' names upon a tree beside the grave so that it might be known, should occasion occur, to locate and remove the bodies.

Thomas Randolph, born at Roanoke, Va., who fell in this same battle, was Attorney-General of the Territory, having been appointed by Governor Harrison.

William Prince, another member, was a representative in Congress, and a member of the committee which located the capitol at Indianapolis.

Elihu Stout, who was Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of the State in 1827, was born in Newark, N. J., April 16, 1782, and emigrated to Lexington, Ky., when quite young; learned the printer's trade and came to Vincennes in 1804, and issued the first newspaper in the Northwest, July 4 of that year, called the *Indiana Gazette*. He was one of the able men of the new empire just forming. A further notice of him will be found in the press article.

Henry Vanderburgh was a Captain in the regular army in the Revolutionary War and became a member of the Legislative council of the Northwest Territory, appointed by President Adams, in 1779, and was elected president of the council. He was subsequently one of the Territorial judges and Vanderburgh county was named after him. He was the grandfather of our fellow townsman, Mr. Harry V. Somes, Sr.

Robert Buntin was a Captain of the United States Army and participated in the Indian Wars of the Northwest. He was Clerk and Surveyor of this county and Buntin street was named in honor of him. He married Mary Shannon, the heroine of Maurice Thompson's romance, "Alice of Old Vincennes."

Robert Evans was a Territorial attorney, a member of the State Legislature, and a General in the Territorial Army.

Ephriam Jordan was a distinguished officer in the War of 1812; and he and two other magistrates, James Johnson and Antoine Marichall, laid off the first township in 1801, and many others of equal distinction to the foregoing might be mentioned, who were Masons and who played an important part in the early settlement of Indiana Territory. Lack of space only renders it necessary for the writer to forego the pleasure of any further detailed mention in the way of individual recognition.

Vincennes Lodge, No. 1, remodeled, refitted and re-furnished its hall in the most sumptuous, commodious and magnificent manner, with storage, kitchen and banquet attachments, and where all the fraternity, from Commandery to Blue Lodge, find delightful homes. There is none

superior to it in the State. It was dedicated on Ascension Day in May, 1899, when adjoining lodges participated in the work, and at the banquet, the following song of welcome was written by the author and used on the occasion:

WELCOME SONG.

Welcome, Knights, with heart and hand,  
 From the country, far and near,  
 Coming as a joyous band,  
 Like Judean pilgrim-seer,  
 Who, in garments travel-worn,  
 Looking for a star to shine,  
 When the Saviour should be born,  
 First might worship at His Shrine.

Lo! He came, and meekly died,  
 To redeem mankind and save;  
 On a cross was crucified,  
 And was laid within a grave.  
 But in triumph He arose  
 Upward to His throne to reign:  
 For, though murdered by His foes,  
 He came not to earth in vain.

Let all people praises sing;  
 And ye hosts, angelic, give  
 Adoration to our King,  
 Sacrificed that we might live.  
 Yes, sweet anthems sound abroad,  
 And bring forth rich diadem  
 For the Christ, our risen Lord,  
 Blessèd star of Bethlehem.

Masonry, from its establishment in Vincennes, has been antagonized to a greater extent than in most towns; nevertheless it has grown and will continue to grow, ever exerting a wholesome influence when opportunity offers. Being non-sectarian and having for its foundation the principles,



equality, brotherly love and charity, and being governed by a patriotic devotion to country, under divine guidance, it has kept apace with the passing years, and no earthly power can stay its progress. The present officers of Blue Lodge, No. 1, are Edward Bierhaus, W. M.; W. C. Kelly, S. W.; E. F. Tindolph, J. W.; J. T. Boyd, Treasurer; C. L. Haughton, Secretary; E. H. Buck, S. D.; W. H. Weed, J. D.; F. D. Foulks, T.; membership 124. Vincennes Chapter, No. 7, was instituted May 20, 1857; membership 70. Vincennes Council, No. 9, was instituted May 20, 1857; membership 44. Vincennes Commandery, No. 20, was instituted February 8, 1869, with the following charter members: Gardiner H. Plummer, Samuel R. Dunn, John T. Freeland, John Kyger, Albert Hayward, W. F. Pidgeon, Hubbard M. Smith, James R. Baird, Charles Temple and A. J. Colburn. The following are the present officers: G. W. Donaldson, E. C.; E. J. Julian, General; H. J. Foulks, C. G.; DeLou Burke, Prelate; C. L. Haughton, S. W.; E. F. Tindolph, J. W.; J. T. Boyd, Treasurer; G. W. McCoy, Recorder; W. H. Weed, S. T.; O. M. Willis, S. B.; W. M. Gilmore, W.; F. D. Foulks, S.; membership seventy-two.

#### ODD FELLOWSHIP.

The Independent Order of Odd Fellows is a fraternal, benevolent and social institution, and has exerted a good influence in this community. Wabash Lodge, No. 20, I. O. O. F., was instituted by dispensation February 5, 1845, and was regularly chartered October 20, 1845. The charter members were: William Newell, T. Lemk, A. C. Liston, Isaac N. Coleman, Jacob Dunkle and John H. Mas-

sey. The first officers were: Theophilus Lemk, P. G.; Isaac N. Coleman, N. G.; John H. Massey, V. G.; William Newell, Secretary; Jacob Dunkle, Treasurer; Aaron Foster, Warden. The first initiations were S. W. Draper and John W. Cannon. In 1866 the Order erected their present fine hall, a rather stately building, three stories high, the third floor being used for lodge room, the necessary ante-rooms, etc. Mt. Olive Encampment, No. 18, was established September 13, 1849, by Special Grand Deputy Patriarch Jared C. Jocelyn, but the charter was not issued until January 9, 1850. The charter members were: J. W. Cannon, John Caldwell, J. P. Crickmeur, Jedediah Heberd, George B. Jocelyn, M. P. Ghee and J. B. La Plante.

Old Post Lodge, No. 332, was instituted July 30, 1869, by W. H. DeWolf, Grand Warden of the Grand Lodge of the State of Indiana. The charter members were: Lazarus Noble, Bernhard Kuhn, Jr., George Parrott, Alfred Patton, William Davidson, H. J. Watgen, John Loten, John H. Massey, Winfield M. Stoddard, B. F. Johnson and J. H. E. Sprinkle. The first officers were: Lazarus Noble, N. G.; J. H. E. Sprinkle, V. G.; H. J. Watgen, S.

Liebig Lodge, No. 441, was instituted March 4, 1874, by Charles Schaum, D. D. G. M. The following were charter members: H. J. Watgen, B. Baswitz, C. F. Recker, Emil Grill, P. Schumacher, Fred Hellert, J. A. Rische, Chris. Huffman, H. Myers, W. Hassinger, John H. Piel, G. Weinstein, Moses Wile and John Osweiler. Officers were: M. Baswitz, N. G.; C. F. Recker, V. G.; Emil Grill, R. S.; H. J. Watgen, Secretary, and Phil Schumacher, Treasurer. These latter lodges were subse-

quently consolidated with the parent lodge, Wabash; Old Post Lodge being absorbed by the Wabash in 1878, and the Liebig in 1880.

The present officers of Wabash Lodge are: E. A. Burnet, N. G.; William Humphrey, V. G.; A. H. Roseman, R. S.; W. A. Hartwell, F. S.; and H. A. Foulks, Treasurer.

#### KNIGHTS OF PYTHIAS.

Among the more recently formed societies or lodges is Dioscouri Lodge, No. 47, of the Knights of Pythias, a fraternal, benevolent organization which was organized June 4, 1874. The charter members were: A. J. Thomas, D. T. Patton, Isaac Lyons, O. H. Cobb, R. J. Greenhow, C. M. Allen, Jr., H. Q. Ashley, D. B. Hamaker, H. H. Hackman, E. M. Kellum, H. J. Watgen, M. Baswitz, J. C. Beeler, E. L. Ryder, F. B. Posey, F. W. Beard, Simon Payne, King H. Malone, Peter McCarthy, C. W. Jones, H. A. Foulks, Morris Fields, Thomas Dayson, J. E. Blair and John Dofar. The first officers were: D. T. Patton, C. C.; O. H. Cobb, V. C.; H. A. Foulks, M. of E.; H. Q. Ashley, K. of R. and S.; James C. Beeler, P.; Thomas Dayson, O. G.; E. L. Ryder, I. G.; C. M. Allen, Jr., M. of A. The present officers of the lodge are: Fred Miller, M. of W.; Sam W. Emison, C. C.; Frank E. Henry, V. C.; William Brown, P.; George Borrowman, K. of R. and S.; James F. Lewis, M. of E.; H. S. Latshaw, M. of F.; W. R. Thurgood, O. G.; A. Grant McKay, I. G.; Jas. S. Pritchett, W. R. Thurgood and C. C. Winkler, Trustees. The present membership of the lodge is eighty-four.



## GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC.

This organization is composed only of the union veterans of the Civil War and was instituted to perpetuate the scenes and exploits of army life and bring closer together those who had gallantly fought to prevent the dismemberment of the Union formed by our fathers of the United States. The name of the institution is Jeff C. Davis Post, No. 16, Department of Indiana, and was organized March 26, 1880, with the following members: James Ostrander, C.; John Hack, S. V. C.; J. C. Beeler, J. V. C.; Joseph Roseman, Q. M.; John Nelson, O. D.; David Agnew, A.; J. J. Cunningham, O. G.; T. D. Mitchell, C. The present officers of the Post are: Abe S. Reel, C.; Grover Ayres, A.; Joseph Roseman, S. V. C.; Jerre Hershy, J. V. C.; John Nelson, O. D.; S. F. Johnson, C.; George Pennington, Q. M.; Louis Mallet, O. G.

## BEN-HUR LODGE.

The Malluch Court, No. 45, T. B. H., was organized December 4, 1895, by R. E. Hayes, of Crawfordsville, Ind., with a charter membership of eighty-one. The following officers were chosen and installed: Chief, H. S. Latshaw; Judge, A. S. Laue; Teacher, J. K. Jessup; Scribe, Will L. Tewalt; Keeper of Tribute, John T. Boyd; Captain, Samuel Thompson; Guide, E. S. Sparrow; Keeper of Outer Gate, John Hurst; Keeper of Inner Gate, C. B. Calloway.

This institution is benevolent, fraternal and beneficiary in its character, exceedingly popular with many, and has a goodly membership. The origin of its name was suggested

by the noted and world-wide read book "Ben-Hur," written by General Lew Wallace, an Indiana man, and had its conception at Crawfordsville, Ind., the home of General Wallace, the distinguished author. Its present membership is 388, and is officered by the following: Chief, A. T. Cobb; Assistant Chief, J. C. Wise; Judge, Mrs. Shugert; Teacher, Mrs. Evans; Scribe, Will L. Tewalt; Keeper of Tribute, Mrs. Latshaw; Guide, Gertrude Scott; Captain, Winfield Robinson; Keeper of Inner Gate, James Hensley; Keeper of Outer Gate, T. J. Burrell.

#### ORDER OF ELKS.

The character of the Elks is benevolent, protective and social. The Order is comparatively of recent origin, it having been instituted in 1868, by a few gentlemen of the theatrical profession, but it has long since outgrown its original environments and embraces in its membership now gentlemen of all professions and industrial callings; the only standards for membership being that of age and worthiness. The Order has grown rapidly and promises much good to the brotherhood of mankind in building up a great fraternity, irrespective of "country, creed, doctrine or belief."

The local lodge was instituted November 1, 1894, as No. 291, by District Deputy James M. Healy, assisted by Indianapolis Lodge, No. 13, in I. O. O. F. hall, with thirty-five initial members, and the following gentlemen were elected to fill the offices, to wit: W. A. Reiman, E. R.; C. B. O'Donnell, E. L. K.; Geo. E. Greene, E. L. K.; E. J. Julian, E. L. K.; S. Liebshultz, Secretary; I. Lyons, Treasurer; Geo. Schwenk, Tiler; E. E. Shores, Esquire;

Charles Laugel, I. G.; Trustees, M. Reindskoph, P. R. McCarty, F. W. Bloom.

The present officers, 1902, are: P. R. McCarty, E. R.; H. J. Foulks, E. L. K.; C. C. Gosnell, E. L. K.; Jos. V. Hershy, E. L. K.; E. J. Julian, Secretary; Geo. Frendrick, Treasurer; Jas. Sowden, Tiler; W. N. Robeson, Esquire; J. C. Wagnor, I. G.; C. A. Weisert, Chaplain; E. A. Beacher, Organist; Trustees: R. B. Jessup, H. Eberwine, Jas. Gatton. Past Exalted Rulers: W. A. Reiman, 1894; C. B. O'Donnell, 1895; Geo. E. Greene, 1896; E. J. Julian, 1897; F. W. Bloom, 1898; E. L. Ryder, 1899; S. E. Beard, 1900; I. Lyons, 1901.

If charity, justice, brotherly love and fidelity are its watchwords, humanity must be the recipient of many of its courtesies calculated to lift up and make glad the hearts of many in times of need and comforting sympathy.

#### RED MEN.

The Piankeshaw Tribe, Imperial Order of Red Men, No. 108, was instituted July 1, 1890. The first officers of the order were: C. H. DeBolt, Prophet; S. W. Williams, Sachem; E. Bierhaus, Senior Sagamore; H. S. Latshaw, Junior Sagamore; George H. Turner, Chief of Records; Isaac Lyons, Keeper of Wampum. The order is fraternal and co-operative in character, and takes its name from a tribe of Indians who founded the village Che-pe-ko-ke (Brushwood), where the city of Vincennes is now located. It is said that these Indians were always friendly with the white people, and allotted the southern part of their village for the habitation of the early traders and missionaries. The fraternal, unselfish and noble qualities of this tribe



of Indians, no doubt, suggested the name for the local lodge, Piankeshaw. The Order is also benevolent in its character, caring for its sick members and attending to the disposition of those who depart "to their happy hunting ground."

The Order is unique in dress, imitating their illustrious namesakes, are veritable "rough riders," and well drilled in the warwhoop of the Red Men of "ye olden tyme," and, while on parade, rival Buffalo Bill's Wild West show.

The present officers are: John L. Interreiden, Prophet; Oliver P. Glass, Sachem; William H. Long, Senior Sagamore; George E. Oshea, Junior Sagamore; Frank A. Thuis, Chief of Records; David H. Byers, Collector of Wampum; H. S. Latshaw, Keeper of Wampum; P. R. McCarthy, Great District Deputy Grand Sachem.

#### CATHOLIC KNIGHTS OF AMERICA, BRANCH No. 533.

This is a uniformed rank of a benevolent, social, sectarian institution of the St. John's German Church, and was organized June 17, 1888. The order is fraternal and protective in its character, is composed of some of the leading men of the church, and, when on parade on special occasions, make a creditable appearance in military drill and display. The following were the charter members: The Reverend Agedius J. Merz, Spiritual Director; Henry Scheffers, President; Wilhelm Helmann, Vice-President; Frank Reiter, Recording Secretary; Peter Kiefer, Financial Secretary; Gerard Reiter, Treasurer; Bernhardt Scheffers, Sergeant; Henry Keller, Sentinel; John Hoffman, Henry Hoffman and John Heller, Trustees. Addi-

tional charter members were Anton Krack and Bernard Jensen.

This Order now has a membership of sixty-five, and their insurance fund amounts to \$82,000. Two of the members of this society have held high and honorable positions in the national organization. Our worthy fellow-citizen, the Honorable Gerard Reiter, enjoyed the high distinction of being Grand Treasurer of the national organization for several years, and, but for the edict promulgated that all grand officers should make their residence in the city of St. Louis, where the Grand Lodge is located, he probably would now be the Grand Treasurer. Another member of this local organization, John W. Nordous, was chosen Grand Commander for several successive years. The present officers of this branch are: The Reverend M. Fleischman, Spiritual Director; Gerard Reiter, President; Joseph Clausmann, Vice-President; Frank Reiter, Recording Secretary; Joseph Hans, Financial Secretary; Joseph Scheffers, Treasurer; Bernard Anton, Sergeant; Joseph Sumnick, Sentinel; Henry Scheffers, Henry Deusterberg and Joseph Ohnemus, Trustees.

#### MEDICAL.

There is little to be said of the earliest physicians located here, since no record exists giving their names or labors. It is said a Doctor Tisdale was here as early as 1792, and that Samuel McKee, Surgeon United States Army, was here as early as 1800, and Doctor Scull, a little later, who was with General Harrison at the battle of Tippecanoe. Knox County history says a medical society

was organized in 1817, and met again in 1819 for the last time, but no names are given of the members.

The first medical society of Vincennes, of which any authentic record exists, was organized June 5, 1827, with the following named members and officers: President, Doctor E. McNamee; Secretary, Hiram Decker; Treasurer, J. Kuykendall; members, Philip Barton, J. D. Wolverton and Doctor O'Haver. Doctor James Porter was elected a member at the same meeting, paying a fee of \$5 for a diploma.

It is presumed that the society was organized under the provisions of the charter of the Vincennes University, which permitted the conferring of the degree of doctor of medicine. The society was called "The First District Medical Society of Indiana." As the years went by Doctors A. Elliot and J. W. Davis became members; the latter subsequently went into politics and became a United States Minister abroad. In May, 1830, Doctors W. Dinwiddie, Joseph W. Posey, Hezekiah Holland, Dr. Pennington and Joseph Somes were admitted to membership. In November following Doctor N. Mears joined. In May, 1831, Doctors W. W. Hitt, H. Davidson and O. G. Stewart were admitted.

In years following, up to 1853, there appear on the roll Doctors G. G. Barton, Thomas Nesbit, Joseph Brown, Joseph Maddox, Daniel Stahl, F. M. McJenkin, F. F. Offatt, William Warner, J. S. Sawyer, John Barry, in June, 1839; B. J. Baty, March, 1840; Alexander Leslie, November, 1843; William Fairhurst, November, 1842; John R. Mantle, November, 1844; James P. DeBruler, November, 1842; Thomas B. Thompson, 1841; Hubbard



M. Smith, May, 1849 ; George B. Shumard, June, 1849 ; R. B. Jessup, February, 1854.

The first session of the General Assembly of the Territory of Indiana passed a law regulating the practice of medicine, and each judicial district had a medical board whose duty it was to regulate the practice of medicine and surgery. In 1828 this society met again, and among other business passed a resolution recommending the formation of a State society, and also forwarded a petition memorializing Congress to pass an act for the formation of a medical pharmacopea. This society's meetings are recorded up to March 23, 1835. The officers were then changed, and the secretary's books, giving further data, seem to have been lost. But the treasurer's books contain records up to February, 1854, the last three members admitted being Hubbard M. Smith, G. G. Shumard and R. B. Jessup, Sr.

In the charter of the Vincennes University a medical department was provided for by the General Assembly of Indiana Territory, and, in 1839, the physicians of Vincennes organized a school of medicine, and petitioned the University board of trustees to grant them a room in their building in which to teach medicine. At that time the property of the University was in litigation, the State having seized it and diverted it to the Bloomington College, and the doctors must have given up their project, as no further records exist of the proposed school of medicine. The charter provision still authorizes the establishment of such a school, and some day in the distant future, when the University is recouped by the State of Indiana for the unjust seizure of its endowment by some of the State's earliest

Legislators, and our city's population, wealth, intelligence and needs justify, another school of medicine may be organized under it, which may be more successful.

The writer has in his possession the seal of the society, the inscription bearing the words, "Vincennes Medical Society of Indiana, 1832," around the margin, the center being occupied by a beautiful fountain throwing up spray from its uppermost basin, while two dolphins are spouting spray from the sides. This society continued in existence, with occasional meetings, until 1875, when an organization was effected called the "Knox County Medical Society," which became subordinate to the Indiana State Medical Society, upon its organization. On October 26, 1875, the Tri-State Medical Society was organized in this city, composed of representatives from the States of Kentucky, Illinois and Indiana, as follows: President, Joseph Thompson, of Paducah, Ky.; Vice-Presidents, W. A. Smith, of Illinois, J. K. Letcher, of Kentucky, and J. B. Armstrong, of Indiana; Recording Secretary, George W. Burton, Mitchell, Ind.; Corresponding Secretary, F. W. Beard, Vincennes, Ind.; Assistant Secretaries, E. H. Lockett, Kentucky, and F. N. Rafferty, Illinois; Treasurer, Alfred Patton, Vincennes, Ind. Other attending members were: John R. Mantle, Hubbard M. Smith, W. W. Hitt, J. C. Beever, W. H. Beeson, R. B. Jessup, Vincennes; J. S. Dukate, Wheatland; J. T. Freeland, Freelandville, and W. Witherspoon, Bruceville, Ind.

The society was organized for helpfulness to each other and to bring the physicians of these States in closer touch with each other; but, in a few years, it expanded so as to embrace the Middle Western States, when its name was

changed to that of "The Mississippi Valley Medical Society;" and, finally, its membership embraced doctors from all parts of the United States, and rivaled in members and talents the American Medical Association.

The present Knox County Medical Society was organized April 25, 1875, by electing for President J. W. Pugh; Secretary, F. W. Beard; Treasurer, Alfred Patton; Censors, O. C. Fairhurst, Hubbard M. Smith and A. J. Haughton. The society now has thirty-five members, and meets bi-monthly at Vincennes. The present officers are: President, J. P. Ramsey; Vice-President, George Knapp; Secretary, J. W. Smadel; Treasurer, C. E. Stewart; Judicial Council, Norman Beckes, J. W. Smadel, J. P. Caney, B. F. Chambers, C. W. Benham.

#### BAR ASSOCIATION.

The first legal courts of Indiana were established here when Knox County was organized, in 1790, and from that period to the present the legal fraternity have been prominent in matters pertaining to county, State and general government.

Some of the brightest legal lights of the country have made this town the forum of their forensic eloquence and astute acumen in legal lore, and some have risen to be judges, authors, statesmen, Congressmen, United States Senators and even to the highest office in the Nation.

Early in the nineteenth century Vincennes could boast of learned lawyers, such as George W. Johnson, Alexander Buckner, Benjamin Parke, Thomas Randolph, John Johnson, Isaac Blackford, John Rice Jones, Henry Vanderberg, John Gibson, and later Samuel Judah, John Law,



C. M. Allen, B. M. Thomas, W. E. Niblack, F. W. Viehe, Thomas R. Cobb, Nathaniel Usher, N. F. Malott, Geo. G. Riley, and others of like repute. With this talent, so far as history and tradition go, up to a very recent period, no bar association was formed. It remained for Attorney S. W. Williams to take the initiative in the matter, when a meeting was called and held at the Union Depot, November, 1900, at which time the Honorable B. M. Willoughby was elected President; L. A. Meyer, Treasurer, and Robert G. Cauthorn, Secretary. A constitution and by-laws were adopted and approved by the court and spread upon its records.

The objects of the organization are mutual improvement and benefit of its members; to encourage a fraternity of feeling and social intercourse; helpfulness to each other in sickness or distress, and to prevent, if possible, the enactment of bad laws.

The following are charter members: Samuel W. Williams, H. S. Cauthorn, Sr., J. P. Haughton, Arthur T. Cobb, John L. Buckles, James M. House, Samuel M. Emison, John T. Goodman, Duncan Beckes, William S. Hoover, Oscar B. Williamson, Robert L. Buckles, Jonathan Keith, W. C. Johnson, H. W. Alexander, A. Campbell, James S. Pritchett, James W. Emison, George W. Shaw, O. C. Philips, W. A. Cullop, Orlando H. Cobb, W. H. DeWolf, C. E. Dailey, W. F. Calverly, Louis A. Meyer, Thomas B. Coulter, Henry S. Cauthorn, Jr., Joseph T. Randolph, Alvin McClure, Charles G. McCord, Richard F. Davis, John Wilhelm, Elmer E. Smith, Clarence B. Kessinger, E. H. DeWolf, C. B. Judah, B. M. Willoughby, James A. McClure, Joseph Ross, George B. Hazelton and Robert G. Cauthorn.

The meetings of the association will be held annually, on the day following Thanksgiving Day, and, after looking after the ethics and good of the association in general, the members will look after the condition of the inner man in a sumptuous banquet, worthy of their illustrious and distinguished predecessor, Blackstone, of "ye olden tyme."

The present officers are: President, James W. Emison; Secretary, Robert Frank Weems; Treasurer, Louis A. Meyer.

#### VINCENNES HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

This society was reorganized in 1899. Present officers: Judge George Shaw, President; Hubbard M. Smith, Vice-President; Louis A. Meyer, Secretary; W. H. Pennington, Treasurer.



## Chapter X.

### MISCELLANEOUS—THE PRESS.

THE newspaper men of this town have had their ups and downs, as is the case in many other places, especially those who commenced publishing papers early in the nineteenth century. The first newspaper published in Vincennes was the *Indiana Gazette*, July 4, 1804, by Elihu Stout. The press and type were brought here on horseback from Frankfort, Ky. In about eighteen months the plant was consumed by fire, but, phoenixlike, it appeared again in 1807, but under the title of *The Western Sun*, Democratic in politics, and continued publication until 1817, when its name was changed again, under other influences, to that of *Western Sun and General Advertiser*. In the forties this paper was sold to John R. Jones, who, with his brother, W. A. Jones, continued its publication until the former received an appointment in Washington, whereupon its publication was suspended. When Jones returned to Vincennes the paper was started again under the name of *Jones' Vincennes Sentinel*. This publication had a short life, and was followed by the *Vincennes Indiana Patriot*, published by J. Mayes. This same year (1853) J. and M. A. McClaugherty published *The Courant*, and soon the two papers united, the name being changed to the *Courant and Patriot*. This paper was suspended in 1856, when George E. Green came into possession of the plant, and at once revived the old name, *West-*



*ern Sun*, after its effacement for about ten years. Mr. Green continued the publication until his death, in 1870. It next passed into the possession of R. C. Kise and A. J. Thomas. On the death of Kise, in 1873, Doctor Alfred Patton became part owner, and in 1876 Royal E. Purcell, the present owner, bought the plant, and has placed it upon a firm and paying foundation. It is now issued as an afternoon daily, and has a weekly edition also.

About the year 1880 W. W. Bailey published for a while a Single Tax paper; and recently Mr. Harbinson started a paper called *The Era*.

Tradition has it that another paper was started in 1818, but there is no record of any other paper printed here until the establishment of the *Vincennes Gazette*, by R. Y. Caddington, about the year 1829, as an organ of the Whig party, who published the paper for about twenty-five years, at which period it was sold to James A. Mason, G. R. Harvey and M. P. Ghee, who started the first daily paper ever published in the city, when its Whigism was changed to Republicanism.

After a few years the plant passed into the hands of Doctor Hubbard M. Smith, M. P. Ghee being retained as local editor. In 1861 Doctor Smith, having been appointed postmaster at Vincennes, gave very little attention to the paper, and in a few succeeding years the plant was leased and sold several times to adventurers, who possessed neither money nor brains enough to make it flourish. It reverted to Doctor Smith for non-payment of purchase money, who, in 1865, disposed of it to J. M. Griffin, who published the paper for a year or two, when he removed the plant from the city, and the *Gazette* ceased to exist.

During the Civil War several papers were launched for public favors, such as the *News of the Day*, by J. G. Hutchinson; the *Old Post Union*, by the same publisher; *The Vincennes Times*, by R. Y. Caddington and General Laz. Noble, which latter was sold to Malachi Krebbs. When failure was made to pay the balance of the purchase money on the plant, it passed into the hands of J. J. Mayes, John Mallet and A. G. V. Crofts, and in a short time ceased publication. There have been two German papers, of Democratic proclivities, published here, one by Mr. Rosenthal many years ago. The latter was called *The Post*, edited by Louis Meyer, about ten years ago, but both these papers were short lived.

The *Vincennes Commercial* was established in March, 1877, by S. F. Horrall & Sons, and was Republican in politics. On February 15, 1881, it was sold to the Commercial Company, with J. C. Adams as editor and manager. In April, 1882, it changed its editor and proprietor, becoming the property of T. A. Adams, who still continues its publication in daily and weekly editions. The paper has been placed by him upon a sound financial basis.

The *Knox County Democrat*, now edited and published by Messrs. Garrard & Quittle, was started about the year 1891, by Mr. Allen Campbell, who published it for a few years and then disposed of the plant. Like many other junior enterprises, it met with reverses, as it had keen competition in older established papers. The present proprietors seem to understand their business, and no doubt pluck and energy will finally crown their efforts with success.

The last paper published here was established by a stock company, advocating Republican principles and seeking



popular favor. It is the *Capitol*, and was edited by George Cook. Its first issue was on February 4, 1899. In March, 1902, Mr. Cook withdrew from the *Capitol*, and the paper is now published and edited by F. W. Curtis, Perry C. Green and Ralph Dukate.

#### LIBRARIES—THE VINCENNES UNIVERSITY LIBRARY.

In the year 1808 there was organized the Vincennes Historical and Antiquarian Society following the organization of the Vincennes University, and it was originally intended to be an adjunct to this latter institution. This society flourished for some years, during which time many valuable books and paleontological specimens were accumulated. But just as the university was preparing to build up a flourishing institution, the newly fledged State of Indiana presumed that she owned everything in sight, and proceeded to confiscate the university's property, which had been acquired by that institution under act of Congress, and to give the proceeds to Bloomington College. This unjust and unprecedented procedure not only paralyzed the school, but gave a death blow to the Historical and Antiquarian Society, as it was to rise or fall with the university. It had accumulated many rare books and specimens of value, but from this time forward it eked out a sickly existence, and finally gave up the ghost, and much of its property was lost. Many years afterwards a few persons of a younger generation, bought up all the shares of stock that were in existence, and, for a small consideration, conveyed the remaining assets of the society to the resuscitated university, which owns the library and antiquarian speci-



mens. The latter has not received many additions, but the library has been increased in numbers of volumes until it now exceeds 5,000; these books are accessible to the public upon proper application. If the conscience of the State of Indiana is ever pricked to a realizing sense of the injustice practiced on its first educational institution even to pay one-fourth of its indebtedness to said institution, this library will be increased and enlarged in the scope of its benisons, until the university will become what its founders designed it should be in fact as well as name. For the quickening of her conscience let us, together with all lovers of justice and righteousness, devoutly pray.

#### CATHOLIC CHURCH LIBRARY.

The church doubtless commenced the collection of books at an early period of its existence, perhaps with the advent of its first stated supply in 1794, but no great accumulation of them occurred until the arrival of Bishop Brute, after the See of Vincennes was formed, in 1834. The Bishop's residence became then fixed here, and the nucleus of the library immediately received large accessions of rare and valuable books, printed in all the European languages, some dating as far back as 1476. Many large volumes, 14x18 inches in size, some numbering ten volumes, the text of same being in Arabic, Syrian and Samaritan languages. There is a bible in the French language, printed in Germany in 1662; others of the date of 1476. Some of these books are slightly illuminated; it is said large illuminated books were once in the library, but were lost. Nothing positively is known on the subject, so the Rector, Father

Guegen, informed the writer. Bishop Brute was a scholar, and had started well the foundation for a magnificent library, and, had he lived a few years longer, would no doubt have added to it largely. This library has grown, with passing years, until it now numbers about 10,000 volumes, many of them rare in this country.

#### CITY LIBRARY.

About 1850 a philanthropic gentleman by the name of McClure bequeathed to each county of Indiana a fund of \$500 that should form a basis for a library in each county, to be called the "McClure Township Library." Under its provisions a township library was formed a half century ago. As no special provision was made to keep it up or care for it, the books became scattered, and were about to become worthless to the public, when, in April, 1889, the city took up the matter and gave it a home in the city hall, and has added to it annually, thus metamorphosing it into a city library, by which name it is now designated. Upon the reorganization of it, under the present title, provision was made for a librarian, a fund for the purchase of new books, regulations regarding the circulation of them, the times of the day when books can be had, etc.

This library now contains about five thousand volumes, and has been conducted in such a manner as to give much benefit and pleasure to the public. The librarians have been competent, faithful and accommodating, Miss Myrtle M. Ruddy, the present efficient librarian, having succeeded, two years ago, Mrs. Judge George Shaw. It is to be hoped that the interest in the city library will not wane, but that the citizens will lend it liberal aid, whether some millionaire comes to their aid or not.

## THE BANKS.

The first banks established in Indiana were at Vincennes, but by whom and at what time is not known, as no record exists here of them, or even of the banks of later years; hence the task of gathering statistics relating to the first banking institutions has been found difficult.

In 1816, when the State of Indiana was admitted to the Union, there were but two banks in the State, one at Madison and the other located in Vincennes, both of which were chartered by the Territorial Legislature. The old Constitution, that of 1816, prohibited the establishment of any bank of issue except the Legislature might charter a State bank and branches, "not exceeding one branch for any three counties.

The first Legislature passed an act establishing a State bank, with branches at Corydon, Brookville and Vevay, and adopting the banks at Vincennes and Madison. "Owing to bad management and speculation, all of the banks failed in 1821, three years after their establishment. For several years after that date there was not a bank of issue in the State." (Bankers' Magazine, 1902, p. 107.)

It is not known to the writer who conducted the first bank, nor the amount of capital it was based upon. Tradition tells of a distillery and mill that were located up the river, opposite the park. There is no other record of any legitimate bank being established until 1836, when the Legislature of the State chartered The State Bank of Indiana, with thirteen branches, one of which was located here, with John Ross President and George Rathborn Cashier, the latter being succeeded by Benjamin F.



Wheeler, who was succeeded by John F. Bayard. This was the only bank here from that period of time until its charter expired, December 31, 1856. January 1, 1857, the Bank of the State of Indiana came into existence, with John Ross President and John F. Bayard Cashier. On the death of the latter, Joseph L. Bayard succeeded to that position in 1859. In 1863, after the national law became operative which taxed State and private banks 10 per cent., the Bank of the State closed its affairs, and The Vincennes National Bank was organized, and succeeded the old bank with the following officers: John Ross, President; W. J. Williams, Cashier. Mr. Ross continued President of this institution until his demise in 1873, after a brilliant and faithful service of thirty-seven years, no patron losing a dollar on account of his banks. A better eulogy than this one fact, telling of his integrity and sagacity, could not be passed upon his career as a correct business man.

The Vincennes National Bank continued after the death of Mr. Ross. W. J. Williams succeeded to the presidency and W. M. Tyler was elected Cashier. Some years later, on the death of W. J. Williams, W. M. Tyler became President, with Hiram Foulks as Cashier. A few years after this, the bank having ceased to do business on sound banking principles, heavy losses followed, which resulted in the winding up of its affairs, causing great distress to depositors and stockholders.

The First National Bank of Vincennes was organized in September, 1871, with a capital stock of \$100,000; J. H. Rabb, President; J. L. Bayard, Cashier. This bank continues to do business. President Rabb continued at the

head of the institution until his death, being considered the shrewdest and safest financier in the city. J. L. Bayard succeeded to the presidency, which position he still holds; P. M. O'Donnell, Cashier; H. V. Somes, Jr., Assistant Cashier; J. L. Bayard, Jr., Bookkeeper.

The German National Bank of Vincennes, with a capital of \$100,000, was organized August 5, 1888. Its officers were: Seleman Gimble, President; Garret Reiter, Vice-President; George R. Alsop, Cashier. Upon the death of the President, William Baker was elected to that position. The officers at this time are: President, William Baker; Vice-President, Garret Reiter; Cashier, G. R. Alsop; Assistant Cashier, H. J. Broeckman.

The Second National Bank of Vincennes was organized in August, 1893, its officers being Allen Tindolph, President; George W. Donaldson, Cashier; W. J. Freeman, Assistant Cashier. Capital, \$100,000. On the death of the President, George W. Donaldson succeeded to that office. The present officers are: President, George W. Donaldson; Cashier, W. J. Freeman; Assistant Cashier, J. T. Boyd; Bookkeeper, J. F. Hall.

In 1859 a bank was organized under the title of The New York Stock Bank, with Samuel Bayard, President; J. F. Bayard, Cashier. This was about the time the free bank craze was beginning to affect Indiana people, soon after which "yellow dog banks" became as thick as blackberries in June; when "counterfeit detectives" were in use as much as a day book with a business firm, to tell them "where they were at," in the financial world, each day. The officers of this institution, reading the signs of the times correctly, being honorable gentlemen and not willing

to be classed with the "wild cat" institutions, hastened to wind up its affairs, having been operative less than two years.

To give the present generation an idea of the character of these institutions, the writer will give a bit of his experience with them. He had a nice little pony he had bought for his son, which became so fat, saucy and gay that, for fear of broken bones to set, he concluded to sell it. Farmer P. came along about this time. He wished to buy just such an animal and a bargain was struck. He took the animal, and the writer took currency in full for same. Not having to use the "shinplasters" until the next day, the writer was somewhat surprised to find a goodly part of them uncurrent with the merchants. I happened not to see Mr. P. that day. When I saw him afterwards, I called his attention to the worthless bills; but, "Oh!" said he, "they were good the day I paid you." I could not swear they were not current at that time, and so I had to pocket the loss. A more infamous law to defraud the people was never enacted than the Indiana Free Banking Law. Uncle Sam stepped in pretty soon and saved the people from general bankruptcy with a national law.

The foregoing have been all the banks of issue organized in this city. There were other private banks, one conducted by R. J. McKenney, called McKenney's Deposit Bank, and one other, the Vincennes German Bank, established by J. L. Bayard and Henry Knirhm, in 1869, and which was succeeded by the First National Bank in 1871, J. L. Bayard becoming Cashier of the latter bank.

W. F. Pidgeon and W. H. H. Terrell opened and started the Bank of Vincennes about 1860, but did little if any



business, and soon closed it. About that time George R. Swallow and a Mr. Black opened a bank in Judah's row, on Second, between Main and Busseron streets. Its business was insignificant and soon closed. Swallow is now president of a bank in Denver, Col.

And there was once a deposit bank located here, when and by whom no record exists to tell. The writer has a bill or note, of the denomination of ten dollars, bearing the superscription: "The Wabash Insurance Company will pay to bearer ten dollars, on demand, for that amount received on deposit. Vincennes.....18.." Vignette, centrally; at top of note, the three graces; on the right hand end the portrait of Jefferson; on the left end, Receipt—Deposit. No signature or date. This may have been the issue of the milling company.

The three national banks of Vincennes, noted in the foregoing statement, are all sound, and doing a large legitimate banking business; and the character and standing of the officers give a sure guarantee of their permanency and prosperity in the future.

#### BOARD OF TRADE.

Although it has been the author's aim to deal with matters pertaining mainly to transactions and persons of the early part of the nineteenth century, and those incidentally connected therewith, yet so important an institution of modern times as the Board of Trade must not be slighted, since it is the bone and sinew of young Vincennes.

The Vincennes Board of Trade was organized in 1883, when N. F. Dalton was elected President, Edward Watson Vice-President, George M. Ockford Secretary, L. A. Wise

Assistant Secretary and Joseph L. Bayard Treasurer. The Board of Directors were J. H. Rabb, G. Weinstein, P. E. McCarty, E. M. Thompson and E. H. Smith. A constitution and by-laws having been adopted, the fee of admission was placed at \$5 for certificate and monthly dues at 25 cents, the membership being unlimited.

This institution has done, and is doing, a good work for the city, and has added to its population and wealth more than all the other influences and agencies combined, and its power increases as time passes by. At its foundation it had many difficulties to contend with, as it was something new and an innovation for the old mossbacks of the city. They could not see in advance from where the benefits were to be reaped for the outlay of their money and labor. They were not willing to "cast bread upon the waters" of trade, trusting to Providence and zeal of the workers for a return therefor. But patience, zeal and labor, with intelligent foresight and faith were theirs, and the rewards followed in due season. The days of their adversity has passed, and they have set the ball of prosperity rolling at greater speed than ever before, as the many late industries added to the general business of the city will attest. Where there was one industry twenty years ago, a dozen or more dot the outskirts of the city, and it is almost daily inquired of by corporations and capitalists who desire good locations for investments for their money. This organization has developed a boom unknown during the past of the city, and if all the citizens will put their shoulders to the wheel, while it is at high tide, it will "lead to fortune and success."

The present membership exceeds two hundred, with weekly accessions, under the leadership of its intelligent and energetic officers.

The following are the present able and progressive officers: President, Edward Watson; Vice-President, Anton Simon; Treasurer, Joseph L. Bayard; Secretary, H. T. Willis, and Assistant Secretary, H. J. Foulks.

### EPIDEMICS.

The history of Vincennes would not be complete without recording something of the epidemics that have visited it during its one hundred and seventy years of existence, during which time some episodes occurred that embraced ludicrous as well as serious phases. Some histories of Vincennes tell of a traditional epidemic occurring in the eighteenth century in this village, but it will be seen, in another part of these sketches, that that epidemic occurred at Juchereau's Fort, at the mouth of the Ohio river. While we know nothing but what tradition tells us, of a first epidemic occurring here, those of subsequent years are recorded in the history of the times.

### THE EPIDEMIC OF 1820.

Not many of the present generation of citizens, probably, have ever heard of this terrible scourge from sickness during the earlier history of this town. In 1820 an epidemic occurred here, as related by the old settlers, that almost depopulated the village. During the summer months a fatal disease prevailed, resembling yellow fever, and the strong presumption is that this disease was the



yellow malady. This fever had often prevailed further north, and its presence in the town at the time was not very surprising. During the early times communication between the Old Post and New Orleans was much more frequent than now, and, as yellow fever existed in the latter city during the summer months, it was not an uncommon occurrence for the germs to be introduced in the North. It was only necessary that favorable conditions should exist for its propagation in the Valley of the Wabash, and, at this time, such conditions existed at Vincennes. The season was exceedingly dry, the river low, and the waters about the town were stagnant, the home of the mosquito. Recent discoveries, especially those brought out by experiments in Cuba, where yellow fever was for many years a common disease, owing to the transmission of its cause through one species of mosquito, *stegomyia fasciata*, will explain the nature and virulence of the fever which marked this epidemic. If only one case had been introduced here from the far South, where this species of mosquito was propagated, in stagnant pools of water surrounding the town, the disease could and would be readily communicated to the inhabitants. The writer doubts not that the disease, so fatal here in the summer of 1820, was yellow fever. This mosquito is represented as darker in color than the less virulent ones, its notes are lower in the scale of sound, and it is these fellows with the basso voice, especially, whose serenades we should object to. The transmission of malarial disease by the mosquito was established many years ago by Italian physicians at Rome, where malarial diseases often exist to an alarming extent.

The year in question the river got so low that the grass grew in great luxuriance far out from the shores, and the opinion prevailed that this was the cause of the virulent fever, and the city authorities had this grass mowed, expecting it to float away with the current, but, on the contrary, it remained where cut, decayed, and became the hot-bed of malaria and the breeder of the mosquito. It having been frequently demonstrated that malaria is often introduced into the human system by the bite of this insect, it was not to be wondered at that fevers prevailed alarmingly at Vincennes at that period. The numerous fatalities attending this scourge gave the town a notoriously bad reputation, and emigrants from the East, seeking homes in the far West, "passed by on the other side," leaving the sick city for other good Samaritans to lend it a helping hand, and lift it to its feet again. That day long since went by. Having learned that the best of water underlies the city, and that it could be easily and cheaply reached through driven wells, a water absolutely free from contamination of malarial and typhoid germs, at a depth of twenty-five feet, and having had the country adjacent thoroughly drained and placed in cultivation, Vincennes now stands in health superior to many and inferior to no city of its size in the West.

#### THE CHOLERA.

Although a model city for health, owing to aseptic soil, pure water, sweet air and healthy topographical conditions, yet like all other towns, it may have visitations of contagious diseases, as its citizens fully realized in the summer of 1850, when cholera invaded the borough, with

great fatality. From the fact that this awful scourge had prevailed in the United States in 1832, and at the time did not affect this town, the people here were lulled into the belief that Vincennes was proof against its invasion. People generally, in fact the medical profession, were ignorant of the cause of the disease, it being before bacteriology had been perfected, so far as to enable the microscopist to isolate the germ, and physicians understood the way it was propagated. When the first cases occurred here, the wise ones of the town ridiculed the idea of cholera being the disease, and the public arose as one man in denying its existence and inveighing against the physicians who had made what was termed "such a foolish declaration." Fortunately, or unfortunately, as some may view the matter, the writer of this was the first one to diagnose the disease and proclaim the true nature of it, and, on account of this bold declaration, his scalp rested uneasily on his head for some time. He was ostracised, and threats were freely made against this medical interloper, who was paralyzing all kinds of business by his wild assertions concerning the nature of the first cases. The writer regrets to state that but one other physician of the borough, Doctor John R. Mantel, coincided with him in his diagnosis, although he extended an urgent invitation to a number of the older members of his profession to visit his patients and investigate the matter for themselves. The foremost citizen of the borough, at that time, was a very intelligent, but self-willed gentleman, who, in addition to being President of the borough, was President of the then incipient Ohio & Mississippi Railway Company, President of the Wabash Navigation Company, and President of the Knox County



Live Stock Insurance Company. Of course this gentleman was an influential man in town, and his dictum was held as law and gospel, from which no appeal could be taken. He stated that the disease, which had been pronounced Asiatic cholera, was nothing more than cholera morbus, such as he had seen in his native New England, and he forthwith proceeded to lecture the young disciple of Esculapius, and vehemently remonstrated with him for giving out false alarms, to the great detriment of the borough's commercial and general interests. The young physician was obdurate, and boldly stood his ground, and, after a warm discussion, the Judge and Chief Magistrate of the town departed, with a very bad opinion of, and a good slice of ill will for, the youthful doctor of medicine. The latter was compelled to endure the gibes and slurs of many of his fellow-citizens as best he could, and, as he was then comparatively a stranger here, he found his daily pathway not a bed of roses, nor were the thorns lacking. But he felt that this state of things could not, and it did not, endure long, as cholera is no respecter of persons, and the high and the low who came into immediate contact with the dread scourge had to take chances alike in attempting to cope with its malignancy. Some days following the outbreak of the disease in the family of Mr. J. D. Watjen (the father of our worthy fellow-townsmen, H. J. Watjen, who can vouch for the truth of the main facts presented), by its introduction through an emigrant from Germany, a young married man named Whitney, from the East, had been installed here as an expert in insurance matters by the President of the Live Stock Insurance Company. This young man, the protege of the chief executive of the company, sought to

make himself particularly obnoxious to the young physician who had been so bold as to pronounce the disease cholera. The offices of the latter and those of the insurance company were not far apart, in the old Judah Row, on Second street. As the clerk passed the door of the doctor on his way to his office, he would, occasionally, stop at his own door, and, placing his hands to his mouth sidewise, halloo derisively, in stentorian tones, "How's the cholera?" then dart in, laughing at what he thought was a capital joke at the doctor's expense. Poor, misguided, unfortunate man! He then little dreamed of what was in store for himself. In less than two weeks from that time he complained of not feeling well, and, going immediately home, sent for his doctor, G. G. Shumard, a very intelligent gentleman, but one who had a deadly horror of cholera. He at once diagnosed the case as one of cholera, went to his office for some medicine, and, upon his return to the home of the young clerk, calling his wife to the door (fearing to go in), gave her the medicine and then, after a few directions, given hurriedly, left the young man to his fate. Ere the shades of night had enfolded mother earth in her mantle of darkness, he, too, was numbered among the victims of the terrible scourge. A little time after this Doctor Shumard called at the writer's office and asked to be permitted to lie in the student's bed, for that day, as he did not wish any one to know his whereabouts, "For," he remarked, "every case of cholera I hear of brings on me symptoms of the disease. What shall I do?" The writer answered that there were but two things to do, in his estimation, to wit: either leave for a healthier region, which, if he did, would ruin his



medical reputation, or stay and take his chances with the balance of his profession, which, if he did, would cause his death, so great was his fear. He chose the former horn of the dilemma, and immediately departed, and remained away until cold weather had set in, when he returned, settled up his affairs and went back to his former home in the State of Ohio. As before stated, this gentleman, notwithstanding his fear of cholera, was a good physician and surgeon, and subsequently became Captain Marcy's surgeon and geologist in his Western exploring expedition in the United States service in the early fifties. He afterward became the Surgeon-General of the Ohio Volunteer Militia, and lost his life during the Civil War.

About this time, that is, during the earlier stages of this epidemic, when doubting Thomases ornamented every block corner, a man by the name of Lempk, who lived on Hart street, and who had nursed the old German emigrant who died with the disease at the Watjen residence, on Water street, in a brick house opposite the American hotel (now La Plante House), was taken ill. He was an Odd Fellow, and Noble Grand John Caldwell called to his aid an eminent French physician, Doctor John Batty, then residing at Vincennes, who at once pronounced the disease to be cholera. And then what did that cholera morbus president and some of the maligners of the young doctor do? They incontinently fled east to the springs and elsewhere, and remained away until "the frost was on the pumpkin, and the fodder was in the shock," fearing to face the music of Old Vincennes sooner. This is but a brief and softened sketch of a phase or two of the cholera epidemic, as many laughable and tragic scenes enacted during



that period are worthy of record. Of all the men who abused the young physician who had boldly stood his ground and pronounced the disease to be cholera, and who had tried to make life unpleasant for him in the borough, but one had the manliness and courage to make amends to him for the wrong inflicted; that was none other than the noble gentleman, William J. Heberd, Sr., who came to him and said in a frank, honorable manner: "Doctor, I had said I would never employ you for injuring, as I conceived you were doing, the business of our town. I find that I was wrong, and, as a slight way of repairing the wrong inflicted, I now ask you to become hereafter my family physician." He kept his word, and the writer was his family physician up to the day when he fell a corpse in Peck's drug store, years afterward.

In conclusion of the subject of epidemics, the writer will say that it is best for doctors to meet them squarely and fearlessly and do their full duty, and they will be the better prepared to combat them, trusting in an allwise Providence to reënforce their skill and energy. In thus meeting them they will be better equipped to achieve a victory over them. With the advanced knowledge of bacteriology and its application in the cure of diseases, the physician of today is more competent to stay the ravages of disease than ever before.

## Chapter XI.

### MISCELLANEOUS, CONTINUED—THE PASTIME CLUB HOUSE.

**A**MONG the old buildings of pretentious character, erected nearly three-quarters of a century ago, situated on Second street, between Busseron and Broadway, is the old Ellis mansion, constructed of sandstone and brick, with massive stone columns supporting the roof of the vestibule, the floor and steps of which are of like material, the product of a quarry situated some distance above the city on the banks of the Wabash river. Another old building, of like character, now nearly, if not wholly, hidden from view by the buildings erected in front of it, is the building of the Vincennes branch of the old State Bank of Indiana, whose pillars were razed, following the sale of the property, and worked into stepping stones, which may yet be seen in many parts of the city. The old Ellis mansion is fittingly occupied by the Pastime Club, a social society organized December 4, 1885, and incorporated December 23, 1889. The charter members numbered fifty, who were among the leading citizens. The first officers were: Robert B. Jessup, President; Mason J. Niblack, Vice-President; H. J. Foulks, Secretary; E. J. Julian, Treasurer; Board of Directors: C. B. Kessinger, P. M. O'Donnell, E. P. Busse, R. B. Jessup, Jr., and H. J. Foulks. The club has prospered and enjoys an enviable reputation. The society offers pleasant social opportuni-

ties through the latest papers and magazines, innocent games at cards, billiards and music, to its members; and invited guests, both at home and from abroad, have spent most delightful "past times" there.

The present officers are: E. J. Julian, President; Gerard Reiter, Vice-President; W. J. Freeman, Secretary; H. V. Somes, Treasurer, and Guy McJimsey, Sergeant-at-Arms. The membership of the club is limited to 150.

#### THE FORTNIGHTLY CLUB.

This is strictly a ladies' literary association, and was organized at the residence of Mrs. Helen B. Bayard, November 11, 1881. The membership was limited to fifty originally, but subsequently was increased to sixty. The first officers were: President, Mrs. Helen B. Bayard; Secretary, Mrs. Alice J. Clark. Other members present at the organization were: Mrs. Ellen Gould, Miss Lloyd Allen, Mrs. E. A. Bryan, Miss Ray Berry, Miss Sabra Cather, Mrs. Ruth Davenport, Miss Katharine McElvaine, Miss Clara DeWolf, Miss Anna DeWolf, Miss Ida Lusk, Mrs. John Steven Horton, Mrs. Reuben G. Moore, Miss Albertine Moore and Mrs. William Glover. The society was incorporated by the following members, June 23, 1901: Mrs. Helen B. Bayard, Miss Katharine McElvaine, Miss Clara DeWolf, Miss Alice J. Clark, Miss Ida Lusk, Mrs. J. S. Horton, Mrs. R. G. Moore and Miss Albertine Moore. The present officers are: President, Mrs. M. A. Bosworth; Vice-President, Mrs. Alexander; Secretary, Mrs. Albert Shepard; Treasurer, Mrs. Charles Bierhaus; Executive Committee: Miss Lusk, Mrs. Doctor Manchester, Mrs. H. B. Bayard, Miss McElvaine and Mrs. M. A. Bosworth.



## COLUMBIA READING CLUB.

The St. Francis Xavier Reading Club, a branch of the National Columbia Reading Club, whose headquarters are in New York City, is a literary society, and was organized in January, 1890, at the residence of Mrs. Helen Burk Bayard, with the following officers: President, Mrs. William Berry; Secretary and Treasurer, Mrs. Helen B. Bayard; Directors, Mrs. J. B. La Plante, Miss Katharine Green and Miss Anna Flynn. This society contained originally eighteen active members. Subsequent to its organization it combined with its labors benevolent work and has recently undertaken the noble labor of building a hospital for general use in this city. Through the indefatigable efforts of its members and the aid of the public their funds for the hospital have gone beyond the thousand dollar mark. Their idea in assuming this herculean task of love and mercy was to honor and perpetuate the memories of General George Rogers Clark, who, through his strategy, skill and indomitable will secured the great Northwest to the Union from the British Government, and Father Pierre Gibault, who rendered General Clark invaluable services in giving him information and winning over the French inhabitants to the American cause. Each one of these distinguished and noble patriots deserve imperishable monuments erected to their memory in this city.

Through the vicissitudes of time this society's numbers have fallen to fourteen. The present officers are: President, Mrs. J. B. La Plante; Secretary and Treasurer, Miss Clementine Weisert; Directors, Mrs. Schuyler Beard, Mrs. John D. LaCroix and Mrs. Helen B. Bayard.

## PALACE CLUB.

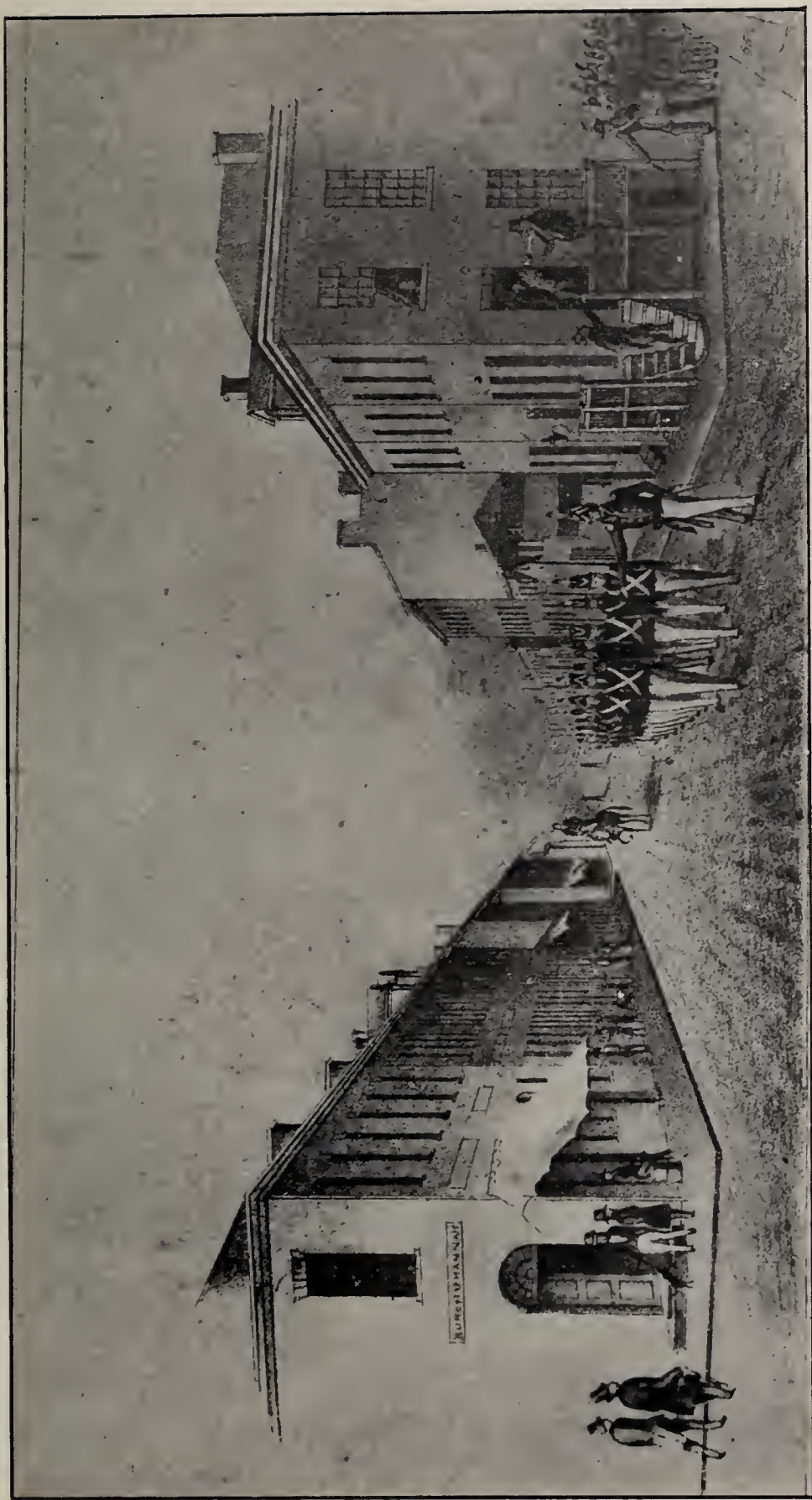
The Palace Club was organized March 1, 1897, with a list of sixty-one subscribers, when the following officers were chosen: President, A. G. Meisa; Vice-President, H. G. C. Pomil; Secretary, F. W. Tweitmeyer; Treasurer, E. H. Frigge; Sergeant-at-Arms, H. J. Piel. The character of this institution is social and literary, and offers a pleasant retreat for young gentlemen when not engaged in business. Its reading room is supplied with journals and magazines, current literature, and a piano for exercise in musical compositions. Other rooms are fitted up for billiards and lighter games, for amusement to while away idle hours, and for rest to the mind after weary hours of absorbing, wearing toil, battling with the problems of life. This association has proven a success, as its influence has been elevating in its tendency and character, and leads to the higher walks of life.

The club is domiciled in a pleasant, commodious building, on the corner of Hart and Second streets, and accessible to all parts of the city by the street railway. The present officers are as follows: President, C. F. Scheid; Vice-President, H. G. Miller; Secretary, H. F. Hoffman; Treasurer, J. L. Baker; Sergeant-at-Arms, W. C. Techner; Directors, Ed. H. Frigge, L. E. Thuis, H. N. Reller. Present membership, forty-four.

## AMERICAN HOTEL.

The site of the present La Plante Hotel, on the corner of Main and Water streets, was formerly occupied by the American Hotel, which hostelry was conducted by Mr. John C. Clark, from about 1825 to 1852. One of his daughters, Mrs. Sheridan Isaacs, is living in Edmund, Oklahoma, and many of his grandchildren, prominent in society, are residing here. It was the leading hotel in the town for many years. Shortly after the writer came to this city, in 1849, the wife of the landlord was thrown from her buggy, on the country road between this town and Lawrenceville, Ill., and fatally hurt. She was as genial and pleasant a lady as the writer ever met. While the writer was eating supper at the hotel, one evening during the summer of 1849, a full grown deer, supposedly being chased by hounds, jumped over the yard fence, facing Main street, ran back through the premises, leaped the back fence and fled beyond the city limits. This episode served to demonstrate the fact that game was plentiful about the town in those days. This old hotel corner was a memorable spot to old inhabitants who resided here fifty years ago, by reason of its having been the scene of a conflagration. It was the site of a store, occupied by John D. Hay, a merchant who emigrated hither in the year 1803, who was one of Governor Harrison's troops at the battle of Tippecanoe. This corner was the principal public place in the city, and whenever the militia mustered, which they frequently did in early years, they made their best maneuvers in front of the old American Hotel, as is shown in the illustration. On an elevated porch, at the side of the building on Water





VIEW AT FOOT OF MAIN STREET, SHOWING OLD AMERICAN HOTEL, BUILT ABOUT 1824.

street, can be seen an elderly gentleman, "Deacon" Taylor, with little Laura, a child of the landlord, in his arms. This occurrence took place more than sixty years ago. Waller Taylor was a Major in Harrison's army at the battle of Tippecanoe, and was at the side of Colonel Joe Daviess and Thomas Randolph when they fell mortally wounded; he was the one who had these two gallant patriots buried side by side; and he it was who cut their initials on the side of the tree under which they found their last resting place, in order that the spot might be known if future occasion required. Randolph was a cousin of the celebrated John Randolph, of Roanoke, Va. Major Taylor was chosen one of the first United States Senators who went from Indiana, upon its admission to the Union in 1816.

The old hotel was located within a block, and on the north of where the old fort stood, and commanded the Main street ferry landing on the Wabash river, and was at one time headquarters for merchants and traders from all parts of the country.

#### PRISON.

During the first period of our Civil Government, prisons and jails were used not only to incarcerate criminals, but for the imprisonment of debtors; however, the latter class were not exactly incarcerated in the jails, but were confined to certain boundaries, beyond which they were not permitted to go. In 1808 an order was passed that, "no objection being made by the creditors, and the debtor making oath that he possessed neither personal or real property, he should be released," and then and there imprisonment for debt was accordingly abolished in the Territory. The

records disclose a description of one of these "debtor's limits," as it were, and it is a curiosity and unique, to say the least, and is worthy of mention here. It reads as follows: "Beginning at low water mark on the Wabash, on the street between Antoine Marichall and Margaret Game-lin's; thence down said street to the lower corner of James Purcell's; thence up to St. Louis street; thence up said street, including the same, to the corner of John Ochil-tree's house, next to Thomas Coulter's; thence up the street, between Coulter's and Ochiltree's to James Krelly's lot; from thence to the corner of the lot opposite the widow Brouillette's; thence down that street leading to H. Vanderburg's, to the place of beginning, including the streets." It is supposed the delinquent debtors knew the deviations of the boundaries outlined and governed themselves accordingly.

Criminal prisoners were first incarcerated in the casemate at Fort Knox, and later on in a temporary jail until a permanent structure was erected in 1803, on the corner of Third and Buntin streets, where the residence of B. Kuhn now stands. Robert Slaughter was placed in this jail for the murder of Joseph Harbin, and was executed in 1805, it being the first execution under the civil rule.

Upon the removal of the court house to its present location, a new jail and residence for the sheriff was built on the northwest corner of the court square, on Seventh street.



## OLD COTTON FACTORY.

One of the notable buildings still standing is the Old Cotton Factory, erected by David S. Bonner about the year 1825. The building has withstood the storms of time and the vandalism of man, and after passing through many and varied vicissitudes, still stands a monument to the enterprise of its builder, after the lapse of nearly a century of time. It stands on the half-square facing southwest, on Barnett street, between Second and Third streets.

Many of the present generation, now resident in this city, are unaware of the fact that not only cotton manufactures, but the cultivation of the staple itself, were among the important industries of this place at one time. One of our old citizens, Mr. Elbridge Gardner, now passed into the eighties, informed the writer that one of the prettiest cotton patches he ever saw was on the lot now occupied by the Vincennes University. He said that the white bursting from the bolls of the densely set green plants was a beautiful sight, and it made a lasting impression on his mind that can be eradicated only by death.

Cotton raising, spinning and weaving were the order of the day at one time in this town, and were the chief industries of the people. But as the South became settled and greater yields of the fleecy staple were reported from that section of the country, in connection with the increased facilities for manufacturing in the East, the old factory's spindles and looms were diverted to the manufacture of woolen goods. In later years the building ceased altogether to be used for its original purpose, and became the domicile of the Novelty Manufacturing Company, by



BONNER'S COTTON MILL, ERECTED ABOUT 1821.



which industry it was used until the erection of its own present building, on the outskirts of the city, to the west and near the river, and on the site where George Rogers Clark maneuvered when about to attack Fort Sackville in "ye olden tyme." The Old Cotton Factory building is now being utilized as a general storage room.

Mr. Bonner, the builder of the Old Cotton Factory, erected a large three-story brick building on the corner of Second and Main streets, using the lower rooms for stores (and for which purpose they are still used), more than three-quarters of a century ago, and yet, today this building is in a good state of preservation.

#### BONNER MANSION.

What is now known as the Allen House, corner of Fifth and Main streets, and owned and occupied by Mrs. Sallie Allen, widow of the late Colonel C. M. Allen, Sr., a distinguished attorney of this city and who contributed much to its growth during his life, was built by David S. Bonner, about the year 1840, which was then considered the finest and costliest house in the town. The building sets back thirty feet from the street, the premises originally occupying a quarter of a block and are today adorned by beautiful shade trees of maple and European linden of forty-five years' growth. This house is three stories in height, exclusive of basement, and is embellished with a large portico, rising above the basement, with sandstone floor and steps, supporting large ornamental fluted columns, which in turn support the roof of the portico. The building is commanding in appearance, contains a large hallway with large airy rooms opening into the same, and the ceilings are unusu-



ally high. Although three-quarters of a century old, it looks as if, with care, it would withstand the corroding elements of time for another three-quarters of a century.

#### MOUNDS.

It has been said when Vincennes was first settled, that on its site was a large mound and that it contained a vault in which skeletons of human beings were found closely packed together. As no authentic evidence can be found of this mound, it is presumed the report originated when the original burying-place of the Catholic church was changed. Then skeletons were found, after excavations were made, when they were given new sepulture.

However this may be, there are three notable mounds in the vicinity of the city that are deemed worthy of record. They are doubtless many centuries old, as the composition of them would indicate from the strata, as many years must have elapsed while they were being built; and these strata may have marked eras in their formation. The names given to these mounds are "Pyramidal Mound," "Sugar Loaf Mound" and "Terraced Mound." The dimensions of Pyramidal Mound are, from east to west three hundred feet and from north to south one hundred and fifty feet. The area of the level summit is fifteen by fifty feet, and it is fifty-seven feet high. Sugar Loaf Mound is two hundred and sixteen feet by one hundred and eighty feet, and has a height of forty-four feet. The Terraced Mound is the largest one, having a diameter at its base of three hundred and sixty feet, from east to west, and two hundred and eighty feet from north to south; its altitude is sixty-seven feet. There is a winding path to the summit,

which commands a beautiful view of the city and the surrounding country for many miles in Indiana and across the river into Illinois. The purpose for which these mounds were made is only conjectural. They may have been intended for points of observation.

The strata of these mounds are composed of alternate layers of sand, charcoal and bones. Or, as these mounds seem to be centrally located and much larger than adjacent ones in this county, and those in adjoining counties, they may have been the theater of ceremonials indulged in by congregated hosts of a great confederacy once existing in this part of the Northwest. The exploration of them and the results achieved do not warrant the conclusion that they were simply places of sepulture. And yet who knows what their deepest depths might reveal? But for what purpose they were designed and made will likely be to the end of time an unsolved problem. The unique character of them, containing the elements of methodical purpose, conspires to invite a close and exhaustive examination by the antiquarian.

## Chapter XII.

### GOVERNOR WILLIAM HENRY HARRISON'S RESIDENCE, HIS POW-WOW WITH TECUMSEH, AND HIS TIPPECANOE CAMPAIGN.

THIS old territorial house has been a prolific theme of romances of writers. Traveling correspondents have viewed it from a passing railroad train, gained a little misinformation, and forthwith indited lengthy articles giving minute descriptions, often with an engraving of the house, as veritable history, when in fact much of their lucubrations were but fictions. Some writers have told of a subterranean passage leading from the house to the river—under a “bluff;” others of a magazine in the basement for storing munitions of war, and a dungeon for the safe-keeping of criminals and prisoners of war; and of a council chamber where the Territorial solons met to discuss grave matters of state; and loopholes for sharpshooters to use in case of an attack by Indians, etc.

It seems timely that the fictions relating to the building should be brushed aside and the light of truth turned on it. With this end in view I have availed myself of all the facts of current histories and from a few aged people who yet survive, that were born in the city in the early part of this century and are possessed of facts observed and traditions handed down to them from their ancestors, to get all the information I could relating thereto and now submit the same.





GOVERNOR W. H. HARRISON'S RESIDENCE, BUILT IN 1804.



General William Henry Harrison, having been appointed Governor of Indiana Territory, arrived in Vincennes in the spring of 1801. There being no suitable building for himself and family to occupy, on his arrival, it is recorded and generally believed, that Colonel Francis Vigo, a wealthy and stanch friend of the Government, who had just completed a fine frame house near the center of the block on Second street, where the opera building now stands, tendered his house to General Harrison for his occupancy until a suitable residence could be obtained or built, but the latter refused to accept any but the large parlor. It is not known whether he continued to remain in this building until his own was completed or not, the same being contracted for in 1805, but not completed until 1806. The main building is a two-story brick, with basement, square on three sides, being oval on the west side, facing the River Wabash and is located inland about 600 feet; there being a gradual descent from it to the bank.

By one historian its cost is said to have been \$20,000, a sum probably in keeping with the cost of skilled labor and material used to construct it, prevailing at that early day on the border of civilization. The walls of the basement are twenty-four inches thick, the upper ones eighteen inches; it has been stated that the brick of which it was built were imported from Pittsburgh, but it is a generally agreed fact that they were manufactured a few miles east of the city by the Thompson Brothers, one of the party being the grandfather of our fellow-citizen, Samuel Thompson, they receiving for their labor two half sections of land. The doors, sash, mantels and stairs were either made at Chillicothe, O., or Pittsburgh, Pa., it being a matter of

dispute as to the place where they were manufactured. Be that as it may, the material was of walnut and its workmanship in the highest style of art of that day and will compare favorably with that of the most costly residences of the present time. The timbers of the house are twice the dimensions of those used in modern buildings, giving it a most substantial character. Between the flooring and joists there is a three or four inch thickness of a mortar composed of straw and clay to deaden sounds. The basement contains a dining-room, a kitchen in which hangs the old fashioned crane of Colonial times; a storeroom, one seemingly built for a detention cell, without a window, supposedly for unruly servants, and four servants' living rooms. There is no evidence existing to show that there was a subterranean passage from the basement to the river under the "bluff," and there is no evidence to indicate that a bluff ever existed at or near the house, as has been printed. The underground passage is therefore as mythical as the alleged "bluff." I have been somewhat familiar with the mansion and premises for nearly fifty years, having had patients in it when it was used as a boarding house by James Gatton and having recently talked with his surviving widow, who was at an early date familiar with every nook and corner in the building for years, and I can not obtain any tangible evidence that a subterranean passage ever existed leading from the building. And as to the alleged portholes, in the basement, through which small cannons might be fired at attacking forces, no evidence exists, and the only opening observable are the windows used for light and ventilation. The storeroom is doubtless the one alluded to by a recent historical contributor



who said, "Another room was a wine cellar. The Harrisons were good livers and were surrounded by French settlers who were experts in wine making." The inference to be drawn from this statement is that Vincennes, at an early date, boasted of its splendid vineyards; but if it possessed them, neither history nor tradition leave us any authentic record of the same. Fifty years ago there were not more than a few hundred grapevines cultivated in the country, and these were of the Catawba variety and existed only in a few gardens, Judge John Moore and Honorable Cy. Poulet having the most. Besides, this grape makes only an indifferent sour wine and is now quite out of date. Frenchmen and wine-growing experts are not quite synonymous; and if that class of people here were experts in wine-making, and the country once contained fine vineyards, the process has become a lost art and, as Ex-President Cleveland would say, it has fallen into "inocuous desuetude." The same authority says that "in it (the wine room of the mansion) was stored, for several years, all the Territorial powder, bullets and flint-lock and smooth bore rifles and other weapons of defense." The idea or thought of any man making his domicile over a magazine, where combustibles were stored, which might be exploded at any time, by accident or design, is too incongruous for belief and too horrible to contemplate. What was the fort for but to contain stores, munitions of war and soldiers to use the same when needed? On the first floor, above the basement, is a commodious hallway communicating with rooms adjoining and with ones above by an easy, broad stairway of the finest make and finish. On entering the hall, the first room to the left is the parlor, having been

incorrectly, I think, called council chamber. It is spacious, its dimensions being  $32\frac{1}{2} \times 22\frac{1}{2}$  feet, with a thirteen foot ceiling; the west wall being oval in form and facing the river. This room was doubtless the Governor's reception room, and where he often entertained many guests, who were then, or became distinguished and historical personages in after times; but it is not to be supposed, or is it probable, that this room was ever used for Territorial legislative purposes. All of the other rooms are spacious and finished in the same high style of art of that period. Inside and outside shutters or blinds were fitted to all the windows, of the same walnut material and finish. A slat, in one of the shutters in a room facing the south, about five feet above the floor, has a bullet hole in it, said to have been the result of a ball fired from a gun by an Indian one night, with the intent of assassinating the Governor, while he was walking the room with his little son in his arms. Its sight calls up pictures and memories of the savage past, and the perils that our forefathers underwent at that early period. The house contains a total of twenty-one rooms exclusive of the garret, which, although never finished, commands some beautiful natural pictures from its outlook, which those of aesthetic tastes would enjoy if viewed therefrom. There are two verandas, one attached to the side of the building facing the east, and the other to the front, looking southwest; and it was in front of this portico, under the shade of some trees a hundred and fifty feet away, that Harrison and Tecumseh, the noted warrior chief, held their exciting and memorable pow-wow. Just at this point in the history of the old building it would seem pertinent to advert to the circumstances that led up to the



holding of the council. Evidences had been manifested that the adjacent tribes of Indians were ill at ease and disposed to turbulence and attacks. The Shawnee village, located near where LaFayette now is, and where the battle of Tippecanoe was fought, was under the control of the Prophet, a brother of Tecumseh and the recognized spiritual leader of that and adjacent tribes; and to his machinations the disturbances were attributed. Early in the year of 1811 Governor Harrison, with a view to ascertaining the cause of the dissatisfaction of the Prophet and, if possible, pacify him, deputed one of his most sagacious and trusty advisers, with a competent interpreter, to hold a council with him and his chiefs, embracing his brother warrior chief, Tecumseh. It is learned from history that these gentlemen arrived at the village one evening and were received in an apparently friendly manner by the Prophet and assigned a tent for the night, with an agreed appointment for a council the next morning. It is said the Prophet's wife was considered a queen among the Indian women, as well as by her husband. Before retiring for the night the interpreter observed an unusual stir among the squaws, and motions made toward their tent, and caught menacing glances and gestures toward them, and so told the ambassador, but he made light of the matter and the interpreter's suspicions that treachery was intended, and when night came he was soon asleep in peace and quiet. But not so with the vigilant interpreter, who kept awake, and had his guns near at hand. About midnight a tap was heard at the door and his name, in the Shawnee language, was called. He found Tecumseh at the door. He had called to warn him of impending assassination by the



Queen and squaws, who had held a council and determined on their death in spite of the protests of himself and others, who told them it would be base treachery to kill messengers of peace, who were their visitors. He told the visitors to rise and go with him. They went silently through the village and down into a wooded ravine near the river, when a noise was made, as if to call wild turkeys, sounds well recognized by all hunters in early days; an answer was returned, and soon two men appeared with the ambassador's horses, which they speedily mounted and rode swiftly away, accompanied by the two guides furnished by Tecumseh, and were soon well on their return trip to Vincennes. Although Tecumseh hated the whites and would have delighted to slay them in battle, he was too brave and noble in character himself to permit his followers to commit cold-blooded murder, and so the messengers of the Governor were saved from a cruel death by his foresight and magnanimity. Subsequently the Governor sent word to the Prophet to send Tecumseh and other chiefs to meet him in council with a view to establishing lasting friendly relations; and about the 1st of August following Tecumseh appeared in the vicinity of Vincennes, and sent word to the Governor he would meet him in council. One account placed his followers at three hundred; other accounts of his arrival placed the number at less than one hundred. The latter doubtless approximates the correct number of warriors who accompanied him. The Governor appointed the following day for the meeting. In the meantime he notified his friends, and a company of soldiers, to be present as a guard, and having placed another hundred fully equipped in his parlor, to meet contingen-

cies, should the council prove treacherous and become belligerent, he proceeded to have seats placed in a grove fronting the residence, about two hundred feet away. By measurement and calculation I find the room fully large enough to contain the secreted company. At the appointed time Tecumseh arrived and found the Governor seated on one of the benches, prepared for the council, and some historians say that he extended to the chief a cordial greeting, inviting him to take a seat beside or near him, saying to him it was the wish of the Great Father, the President of the United States, that he should do so. Tecumseh, it is said, glancing around at the soldiers drawn up near by, looked furtively at Harrison and then, looking upward, said: "My Father! The Sun is my father, the Earth is my mother, and on her bosom I will recline;" and, so saying, cast himself on the green sward. Whether this grandiloquent speech was actually uttered by the Indian chief, or was the emanation of some ardent admirer of him, will never be known; however, there are reasons to doubt its reality. But, as the reputed episode is a pretty conceit, for that reason it should maintain a place in the history of the transaction. Yet as to the main facts about what occurred at the meeting and its locality, there can be but little doubt, as ample testimony exists to establish the point at issue to any reasonable seeker after truth. What occurred at this meeting was related to me nearly fifty years ago by Esquire Robert McClure, a native and a very intelligent and observing gentleman, long since dead. He said the council was held under the shade of some walnut trees in front of the Harrison mansion, two hundred feet away. He said he was a mere lad then, but he remembered not



only the place of the meeting, but many things that then transpired. He represented the scene as dramatic from the beginning, when Tecumseh refused to be seated by the side of the Governor, preferring one on the green sward. After the preliminary compliments of the actors, Harrison told Tecumseh that he had heard that dissatisfaction obtained with the Indians, and for that reason he desired a conference with him, and had invited him and his chiefs to meet him in council, in order to disabuse his mind as to the feelings and intentions of the white settlers and that of the Government of the United States. He said the Government had ever been the friend of the Indians, and had always treated them kindly and justly. In reply, Tecumseh, through the interpreter, Barron, told the Governor in an excited manner that he lied; when as quick as a flash Harrison arose to his feet and drew his sword to resent the insult, but his friends, surrounding him, prevented the blow. Terrible excitement prevailed for a while, and a general battle seemed imminent between the Indians, soldiers and citizens. When the tumult had somewhat calmed, the Governor summarily dismissed Tecumseh, telling him his language was such that he would hold no further conversation with him; and the chief retired with his braves up the river to his camping ground. On the following day Tecumseh, repenting his rashness, sent a messenger to the Governor requesting another meeting, to which he acceded provided the chief would apologize for the insulting language he had used, and come only with a few braves. The meeting was held but the principals parted without perfect agreement on a peaceful basis. That the council was held in front of the veranda looking southwest under



some shade trees about two hundred feet away there can be little doubt. The venerable A. B. McKee, a nonagenarian,\* told the writer that his opinion, based on information gained from an eye witness, many years ago, is that the meeting of Harrison and Tecumseh occurred at the point named above, and in the shade of some walnut trees. Mr. Vital Bouchie, a native Frenchman of this city, now upward of ninety years old, coincides with the opinion of Mr. McKee.

The testimony of Judge John Law, a distinguished lawyer and an ex-member of Congress from this city and congressional district, who settled here in 1817, shortly after the famous council was held, and while yet its place and transactions were fresh in the memory of the citizens, agrees with the two former witnesses, and should be held as conclusive as to the locality, but he does not state the kind of trees under which the meeting took place. In his published history of Vincennes he says: "The council was held in an open lawn before the Governor's house, in a grove of trees which then surrounded it. But only two of these, I regret to say, are now remaining." John Law's residence for many years was only a few hundred feet southwest of the Harrison residence.

The door in the southwest side opens into a hall which communicates with the lower rooms and stairway; the door on the east side is less pretentious and communicates with a single room; and, hence, it must be concluded that the front of the house faced southward, looking in the direction of the locality where the pow-wow was held, as that was "before the Governor's house."

---

\* Recently died,

On my arrival in this city a little more than fifty years ago, I remember to have noticed two trees, which were alluded to by Judge Law. In that year the title to the Harrison premises passed to B. C. Armstrong, who, it was said, during his brief ownership of the property, acted the vandal, in slaying the historical and other trees merely for firewood, when fuel could have been then purchased for about one dollar per cord prepared for immediate use. The spot having been verified where the conference took place, I sought to ascertain the character of the trees, and, with that object in view, I visited the present owner of the property, and asked him if he had ever seen any evidence of a grove of trees about where his paper mill stands. His reply was that, in clearing away and leveling the ground, preparatory to erecting the buildings, the stumps of three trees were noticed forming a triangle, being about forty or fifty feet apart. A pick was obtained and the stump of a tree was found just in front of his office, fifteen feet away; in a moment it was laid bare, and parts of two of the roots were unearthed and broken off. The roots were sawed in twain to observe the color and character of the grain. Those present pronounced the roots to be walnut timber. An expert dealer in woods, Mr. Heathcote McIlvaine, had a like opinion, and, in cleaning them of clinging sand, the dark walnut stain, a crucial test, was in evidence so abundantly as to turn the water to ink black color.

Hence I think it follows, from the evidence adduced, that the location of the spot where the famous Harrison and Tecumseh council was held, and the character of the grove have been clearly and fully demonstrated.

The old mansion, under the light of truth, will lose none of its beauties and fascinations by dispelling from it the nebulae of gauzy fables, thrown around it by fancy-weaving, peripatetic correspondents. It is a historical relic which has an intrinsic value of its own, and needs no veneering or furbishing to make it ever dear to those who cherish memories of the fading past. As a matter of history, pertinent in this connection, and a result of this famous council which culminated in the battle of Tippecanoe and the final overthrow of the Prophet's and Tecumseh's power in Indiana Territory, it would be well to state the main point of the controversy which led up to it. Some time previous the Government had made treaties and purchased lands from some of the Indian tribes. Tecumseh claimed that a confederacy existed, of the various tribes, and that neither one could alienate its lands without the consent of the whole. Governor Harrison dissented from the contentions of the chief, and hence a peaceful understanding was impossible. So at the conclusion of the second council Tecumseh and about twenty braves started south in their canoes down the river. Before coming to Vincennes it is said he had exacted a promise from his brother, the Prophet, that he would not engage in a war with the whites in his absence. Harrison, suspecting that Tecumseh's trip south boded evil (and it so turned out that his mission was afterward learned to be to form alliances with the tribes along the Ohio and Mississippi rivers), determined, after considering the outcome of the council, and the preceding episode, when his ambassador to Prophet town barely escaped assassination, to prepare for a visit to the Prophet and secure an amicable or an enforced peace, if needs be,



by battle. Before starting to the Tippecanoe village, he received accessions to his little army from Kentucky, augmenting it to about seven hundred efficient men. Being thus prepared to cope with any hostile force he would likely encounter, he left for the Tippecanoe village about October 1, stopping at Terre Haute to build a fort (naming it Fort Harrison), after which he proceeded north on his mission, arriving at the mouth of Vermillion creek October 31, where he built a block-house for the reception and protection of stores.

On the night of November 6 he arrived in the vicinity of the village, still maintaining a friendly demeanor toward the Indians, and, meeting the Prophet's ambassadors, assured them of his peaceful intentions, and a council was agreed on, to be held the next day. That night passed off quietly until 4 o'clock a. m. of the 7th, when his forces were attacked without warning, and the battle of Tippecanoe was fought, against odds (the Indians numbering eight hundred and on their chosen ground), and won, breaking the power forever of the Indians in this part of the West, and bringing peace to the long suffering settlers. Tecumseh, returning from the South after the battle, was so chagrined that he went North and joined the English, and was slain in the battle of River Raisin.

The vicissitudes through which the old mansion has passed, during the past seventy-five years, have been many and varied. After the Harrisons left it, the building was used as a dwelling, as a school house, warehouse for storing grain, and for a hotel, and much of the time it remained unoccupied, and was a great resorting place for imaginative, idle youths, fond of adventure, who, amid the dark

labyrinthian cellars, conjured up spooks and subterraneous passages, upon which they could dilate upon in rehearsals to their less favored but credulous friends.

The lands on which the Harrison residence was built comprised lots No. 1, 2, 3 and 4 in upper prairie survey, which embraced all of the river front, from Hickman to Hart street, running back to the Highland foot-hills, and contained 280 acres. The ground on which the house stands, and that constituting originally the yard, garden and outlots, embraced all of that which is bounded by the river on the west, Scott street on the south, by Park on the east and by what is now called Harrison street on the north, this latter street being known originally as Perry. In September, 1815, the plat of Harrison's addition was made and legalized by an act of the Legislature on January 3, 1817. This plat embraced that portion of the land reaching from the river to Seventh street, then called Trotier street. The remaining portions of this land is embraced in Cochran's, Malott's and Shepard's additions to the city of Vincennes.

On June 26, 1821, Governor W. H. Harrison deeded the property to his son, John Cleaves Symes Harrison. From his estate it passed into the possession of David C. Armstrong. He sold it to James Ewing, and he to W. F. Pidgeon. Flavius Pidgeon inherited and sold it to the present owner, Mr. Edward Shepard, who has expended much time and money in making repairs and trying to restore to the old mansion some of its former beauty and attractiveness, for which all lovers of historic places and memories of pioneer days should be truly thankful. We hope its pristine glory may be regained and it continue to be an interesting relic in our city for ages to come.

## Chapter XIII.

### FACTS AND LEGENDS—POPULATION.

HAVING often been asked about the population of the town, especially in its early existence, the author subjoins the following, believing it substantially sets forth the facts:

The first census recorded was taken in 1769.

1769.	When it was .....	69
1777.	Lieutenant-Governor Edward Abbot's report gives.....	250
1800.	The next report was by United States Government: Males, 373; females, 333; slaves, 8; total .....	714
1810.	Males, 336; females, 329; slaves, 5; total .....	670

The census in the next three decades gives the town and county together, the town being estimated at one-fifth of the total population.

1820.	Whole county..	5,315.	Town estimated at..	1,029.
1830.	Whole county..	6,557.	Town estimated at..	1,311.
1840.	Whole county..	10,657.	Town estimated at..	2,131.
1850.	Vincennes population, separately taken, was	2,070.		
1860.	Vincennes population, separately taken, was	3,960.		
1870.	Vincennes population, separately taken, was	5,438.		
1880.	Vincennes population, separately taken, was	7,680.		
1890.	Vincennes population, separately taken, was	8,850.		
1900.	Vincennes population, separately taken, was	10,249.		

It will be observed that the increase of the population for the four last decades has advanced with increasing



impetus, and the increase during 1901 and 1902 will be one hundred per cent. greater than the late preceding years, and the outlook is promising for a greater increase in the immediate future. Not a house is for rent, buildings are rapidly going up, and the population, estimated on the school enumeration, now exceeds 12,000.

#### VINCENNES' FIRST THEATRE.

History tells us that a theatre was built here about the year 1806, on the corner of Broadway and Water streets, by John Rice Jones, an attorney, official and politician. It was first occupied in 1807, when the play was "Drowning Men Catch at Straws."\* A singular coincidence happened on the evening of the opening, in the drowning of a citizen, Robert M. Douglas.

That a theatre should be started in this place in the long, long ago days, environed by the wilderness of the Northwest, far away from civilization, need not be wondered at, since all the world's a stage, as some one has said, and in every day life people are but the actors. If this phrase were transposed to read, "In all the world there is a stage," the aphorism would be equally true; as in savage and heathen lands, people may be found acting the various roles, from serio-comic to veritable tragic,—from the Indian war-dance to the refined tragedies and comedies of modern times. Human nature is the same with all peoples and in all climes, and the craving for recreation, novelty and variety seems innate in the human creature. "A little nonsense now and then is relished by the best of men;" "All

---

\* History of Knox County, p. 244.

work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," and "Variety is the spice of life," are axioms voiced all along upon the waves of expressed thought. Excessive labor and serious, prolonged study are inimical to man's terrestrial happiness. The bow, long over-bent, loses its elasticity, and ceases to respond to the light touch of the skilled archer. After diving into serious problems of everyday life, subjects of lighter vein bring rest to the mind and zest to the passing hours.

It seems that the playwrights of the olden days did not seize upon the episode of the raising of the first flag over Sackville as one suitable to the times, and it was left for others to exploit the reported act, in the play of "Alice of Old Vincennes."

The lighter vaudeville plays were in vogue in rural districts in those early days.

Evolution has wrought some changes in the character of them, but light comedy roles will continue to be favorites with the masses as long as a good, hearty laugh is enjoyed.

It is a singular fact that the present McJimsey's (Green's) Theatre should occupy an adjoining lot to the first one, built nearly a century ago.

#### THE OLD FERRY.

One of the oldest and most important institutions of the city sixty years ago was the ferry. Originally the canoe was the chief mode by which the citizens crossed the Wabash, but, very early in the nineteenth century, a way was devised far superior to the canoe or pirogue, in ease, celerity, safety and accommodation, as horses, carriages and

stock of all kinds could be transported by a boat propelled by self-adjusting apparatus, which created a water power. The first license for a ferry was granted to Colonel Francis Vigo, February 16, 1805, "from his land on the north-west side of the Wabash river and opposite to the town of Vincennes, across the said river."\* There were two ferries three-quarters of a century ago—one at the foot of Main street and the other at the foot of Broadway street. These boats were probably forty feet in length and ten feet wide; the sides were of single pieces of broad, thick timbers, shaped at the ends like a canoe, with flat bottom of thick planks. The machinery of the motive power was simple, but not very easily described. A buoy was anchored a hundred or more feet above the track of the boat, in the middle of the stream, to which a stout wire cable was attached, running from the center of the boat; another wire was attached to the one up stream, one end being unattached, reaching to the boat, which could be changed to either end. A broad movable plank was connected at each end, on the upper side, which could be lowered below the boat, or raised to the surface of the water, at will, by a lever. By heading one end of the boat up stream, and shortening the loose reversible wire, keeping it taut, and lowering the plank at the other end, the current of the stream gave impetus to the boat and carried it silently and swiftly to the opposite shore. The return trip was made as quickly by a reversal of the appliances.

Esquire James Gibson kept the lower ferry and Esquire Thomas Bailey ran the Broadway street ferry. The latter lived on the opposite side of the river, just below the B.

---

\* *Indiana Territorial Journal*, p. 126.



& O. S. W. railway bridge, opposite Hart street, in a brick house. Tradition tells of an amusing episode, with a tragic side, connected with the latter ferryman. Being a widower, Bailey took it into his head to get himself a second better half.

In those days charivaris were common following weddings with widowers, and especially so with those who married again before the conventional time had elapsed after the death of their consorts. If the groom in this case had violated custom it is not known, but if he had, he perhaps had heard of that precedent set by Father Whitaker, a rather eccentric and celebrated Methodist circuit rider, which had occurred about this time in Kentucky.

Father Whitaker was blessed with a good-sized family of small children, and, having had the misfortune of losing his helpmeet, and his labor of circuit rider taking him from home a great deal of his time, when his little family were left without protection or help, he concluded it was his duty to take unto himself a "better half" who could look after their wants in his absence, remembering, no doubt, the divine injunction, "He who will not provide for his household is worse than an infidel." So in a very short time after the demise of Mrs. W. he found a good Samaritan woman who was willing to share his troubles and joys with him, and they were married. Some of the sisters and brothers of the church were shocked at the hastiness of the preacher, and, when Conference next met, he was cited to appear and show cause for his unseemly behavior, which was calculated to bring scandal on his church. When arraigned by the prosecutor for his action, Brother Whitaker pleaded, first, that he was compelled to be absent from his

helpless children while serving his church much of the time, who needed care; second, that he was too poor to hire a housekeeper, and, lastly, that "Sookey Honey" was just as dead in three weeks as she would be in three years.

These arguments appealed with such force that conviction was out of the question, and the brother was given a clean bill of acquittal.

So, on the eventful evening, while the bridal party was at the height of its enjoyment, some French boys crossed over to the house to give the groom and bride the usual charivari. Becoming too annoying, the groom introduced his old fowling piece and fired into the midst of the revelers. Although none were seriously injured by the charge, the merrymakers became incensed, recrossed the river and procured an old smooth-bore cannon, loaded with powder and ball, and, placing it in position, blazed away at the house of the groom. A truce was then declared, a protocol signed, and the white-winged dove of peace again hovered over the crystal waters of the Wabash, the dance was resumed, and the bridal festivities proceeded without further disturbance.

#### THE PRIMEVAL CONVEYANCE.

The memory of the oldest inhabitant, nor even tradition, runneth back to the time when the old "French cart," the primitive mode of conveyance, first made its advent in Vincennes. It was unique in its character and appearance, and its model may have been one of the relics saved from Noah's ark, which rested on Ararat at the subsidence of the flood. This cart was the first mode of conveyance introduced to lessen the burthens of the French pioneers, soon after the first settlement of the village, in

1732. The present two-wheeled cart and old gig have some resemblance to its size, shape and capacity, save that its body was of greater size, and it was uncovered and unseated. It seems to have been designed by its patentee, if its originator could be so called, to act as a family carriage, as well as a truck and wood carrier. When used as a carriage, chairs and stools were set in it for the occupants, which could be removed when a load of corn or wood was to be hauled. Its composition was entirely of wood, including wheels, body and shafts, and the Canadian pony, its motor power, was rigged with a bridle and harness of ropes. In reference to this old mode of conveyance, Judge Law, in his article describing worshippers coming from church, has this to say: "On 'fast' days might be seen the patriarch of his flock, with blanket *capot*, a blue cotton handkerchief around his head, with a pipe in his mouth, and with his family seated in chairs, in his untired cart, which had never known the use of iron, drawn by a Canadian pony, and conveying his generation, as his fathers before him had done in theirs," etc.

The use of this cart and its equipment obtained, with slight alteration, up to the middle of the nineteenth century, and its appearance is embalmed in the writer's first recollections of the Vincennes of fifty years ago. Just when it made its first appearance and its final exit is not exactly known, but, like many other things and customs, it gave way in the evolution of time, to something better and more in accordance with the thought and genius of the age. The old ox cart followed "the one-horse shay"; next, the light two-horse wagon, and that by the ponderous six-horse wagon, with top ribbed and covered, not very unlike a river schooner. These wagons were the carriers of goods



from the mercantile depots, which obtained until the middle of the past century, when they gave way to the iron horse and cars. And now steam seems to be gradually giving way to the mightier motor power, electricity. As to the advance in the construction of wheeled conveyances, including the newcomer, the automobile, the writer would say that half a century ago there were only two or three carriages, and not exceeding half a dozen buggies in the town, horseback and wagons being the almost universal mode of land conveyance. Now every family has its carriage or buggy, and even the old French patriarch drives to the city from his country seat in his landau behind a span of blooded thoroughbreds.

#### THE DONOVAN BOULDER LEGEND.

Though not a President of the United States, Jefferson Davis was elected President of one portion of our country, which was called for a while "The Southern Confederacy," and was quite an able and notable man. In early life he was a Lieutenant in the American Army, and while in the service of his country tradition says he was stationed at Post Vincennes, about the time Captain Zachary Taylor, of the United States Army, was, in the line of his duty, occupying this place. Many years ago a legend obtained currency here to the effect that Captain Taylor had a charming young daughter, Miss Sarah, who captivated the young Lieutenant with her charms, and, while the courtship was going on, they frequently took rides to the country beyond the high lands. About this time Mr. Jeremiah Donovan, a worthy and intelligent young gentleman who lived here, had a sweetheart in the same neighborhood, by the name of

Wyant, and, while out sparking, would often see his friend Davis and Miss Taylor sitting on a large boulder lying in the woods, resting after their jaunt hither; and it seemed to be a favorite trysting place, where the passing winds wafted the aroma of the clover around and the merry songsters poured forth their love songs to their mates in the green swaying branches just above their heads. But those halcyon days were not to last always, and ere the climax was reached, by love's fruition, Captain Taylor and family became domiciled at another post. After their departure, Donovan, more fortunate than Davis, wooed and won his fair country maiden, and soon became a benedict. Love ran not so smoothly with the other couple, as the Lieutenant's aspirations met with opposition from the young lady's father, and they only succeeded in realizing the joys of love's young dream years afterward, by an elopement. Davis soon left the army and drifted into politics, and subsequently became the chief factor in the revolt of the Southern States, and was chosen their President.

Many years before Mr. Donovan died (in memory of his old friend Davis, and the episodes on the boulder, and his admiration of him and his sweetheart, Miss Taylor, and perhaps his own visits to that trysting spot) he had it removed to his residence in the city, and placed it in the front yard, on the corner of Sixth and Broadway streets. After his death the property was purchased by Doctor John H. Rabb, President of the First National Bank, who let it remain there perhaps on account of the romantic association with it, and it still lies today on the same spot, after the lapse of more than half a century.

It has been said that this legend has no foundation in fact; that the lady in question was too young to marry at

the time her father's alleged residence was here. But what has this problem to do with the romance? It is said Davis was once stationed here, and Miss Sarah (not Jessie, as some have it) Taylor may have visited here subsequently to the reported time her father occupied this post; and the episode may have occurred just as related by Mr. Donovan, and the fact that the young lady and the Lieutenant did have a courtship, and did consummate the same by an elopement, gives color to the truth of the legend. And the well-established fact that the narrator of this romance did woo, win and marry Miss Wyant at the country farm alluded to; did subsequently bring his bride to the city, and, years afterward, transfer the old trysting stone to his front yard, also gives color to the probability of the truth of the foundation of the legend. Now, let me ask what object Mr. Donovan had in going to the trouble and expense of removing an unprepossessing-looking, unshapely boulder to his front yard, if some romance or some pleasing reminiscence was not connected with it which he wished to perpetuate?

The writer thinks the romance stands on a better foundation than one-half of the fables that have been palmed off here on the people the past few years as veritable history.

Many passers-by, on viewing the rude monumental stone of Nature's handiwork, may query as to the reason why that ugly rock is kept there. If it could only speak it would vindicate its right of presence, with the "old, old story," rehearsed to the willing ears of some who have long ago gone to dreamland.

Nature could oft a tale unfold  
Of mem'ries past and things to be,  
If we had vision, to behold,  
And hands to use her mystic key.



## LEGEND OF "ALICE OF OLD VINCENNES."

In writing his superb romance, Maurice Thompson had to have a heroine worthy of the thrilling episodes occurring in the great Northwest during the Revolution, and no fault can be found with him if she were obtained from the realms of fancy, if the impossible is not too greatly trenched upon. Where fiction takes upon itself the habiliments of reality, criticism is impotent of harm, when success is the goal aimed at. In cogitating over the threads of romance out of which the woof and warp of the story of "Alice of Old Vincennes" was to be constructed, Maurice Thompson little dreamed that the wiseacres of this town would attempt to materialize Alice Roussilon, and identify her with a dashing creole of a past age; nevertheless, such has been attempted, and with some claims of success, for a while; but an image-breaker came along and dashed our fondest hopes. We were hopeful when we read the following seemingly authentic piece of information pertaining to ancient history in the *Vincennes Commercial*, being copied from the *Terre Haute Express*, which last paper derived its information from a Logansport paper. Here it is, verbatim:

"The only man living today who can explain the characters in the book, 'Alice of Old Vincennes,' lives here, in the person of Charles B. Laselle, Judge of the Probate Court and dean of the Logansport bar. His grandfather was the foster-father of 'Alice,' whose real name was Mary Shannon, daughter of William Shannon, Captain of a company in George Clark's regiment. Mr. Laselle was born in Vincennes, over eighty years ago, and knew 'Alice' well; her son, who was named William Shannon, was a playmate

of Mr. Laselle. The Shannons lived on the west side of the river at Vincennes, and, during an Indian raid, all the members thereof, except 'Alice,' were massacred. In this Mr. LaSalle explains why the girl was not killed, a point which the author of the book, Maurice Thompson, fails even to attempt. The old man says that the girl, while running from the savages, cried, 'Mon Dieu! mon Dieu!' and the Indians, believing that she was of French descent, allowed her to live. She found a boat ready to cross the river, was taken aboard, and afterward cared for by the residents of the town. Her foster-father, known as Gaspard Roussilon in the novel, was no other than Francis Busseron, the grandfather of Mr. Laselle."

In the foregoing extract, it will be observed, the statement is made that Mary Shannon (Alice Roussilon) was the only one of the family who escaped in the massacre of Captain William Shannon's family, and that she did so by crying as she ran, "Mon Dieu! mon Dieu!" and that the Indians, understanding the expression, and, being friendly toward the French, let her escape across the river. Following this publication, Mr. H. A. Foulks, our esteemed fellow-citizen (whose wife is the daughter of the late A. B. McKee, whose grandmother, Sarah Shannon, was a sister of Mary Shannon, the alleged Alice Roussilon), drew the old Vigo Bible in contradiction, and in which are registered two other sisters, one of whom, Elizabeth Shannon, married Colonel Francis Vigo. This old record, in fact, shows that there were six children, five Shannon girls and a son, named William Shannon. Elizabeth was born March 23, 1770, Sarah in 1775, and Mary (Alice Roussilon) in 1777. So it appears that the old Vigo Bible record destroys



the identity of Mary Shannon with Thompson's heroine. While this is so, the author had some foundation for some of the characters introduced in his book. At the time of the capture of Vincennes by Clark there was a Frenchman here who was Mayor, or Chief Civil Officer of the old town, by the name of Francoise Busseron, after whom a street in the city and a township in the county have been named, and who was commissioned a Captain in the militia by Clark, before or just after the capture of the town. The positions he held and the name are so much like that of Gaspard Roussilon that it might have been taken by Thompson as the basis of the latter character. Another item in the make-up of the plot is the significant one that Mary Shannon (Alice) was an orphan child and an adopted daughter of Captain Busseron. The drawing of the record on Mary Shannon bars her from actual participation in the flag-raising over Fort Sackville, as she was just two years old on that memorable occasion. But I doubt not at that particular time she was cooing "Yankee Doodle" in her little cradle and keeping time with her chubby feet to the music of the fife and drum. So, if she did not perform all the heroic and patriotic acts attributed to her, it was no fault of hers. Father Time had just delayed her birth a few years too long for that episode. As to Mary Shannon, the reputed Alice, the author (Thompson) does not claim great beauty for her, when she was "sweet sixteen," but the reason for that was doubtless owing to a traditional view handed down by a discarded lover, or one whose æsthetic taste could not appreciate the highest types of beauty. A gentleman of discernment, yet living, who knew Alice when he was a



boy, says, in relation to this subject: "Judging from her appearance in middle age, she must have been a beautiful girl. The most prominent features of her character were that she was very independent and kindly. She was, in fact, such a woman that the men would have called her 'a grand old lady,' and the women, 'a sweet old lady.'" The anachronism committed by the author in making out the case of Alice was justifiable, as life is often prosy without the spice of romance added to it to give it zest. It must be taken for granted that she was all the poet's fancy painted her, in the portraiture given of her physique and character. She was a dashing beauty, an expert with a foil, a crack shot with a pistol or rifle, and a full match with Cupid in wielding his bow and arrow, in his skirmishing raids for trophies of the *genus homo*.

## ALICE OF OLD VINCENNES.

## I.

In the village, Che-pe-ko-ke,  
In the times long past and gone,  
Nestled on the Ouabache river,  
Lived brave Alice Roussilon.  
Not a flower in valley blooming,  
Not a songbird in the glens  
Was so fair and sweet as Alice,  
Pretty maid of Old Vincennes.

## II.

Oft she winged the grouse and partridge,  
As from covey up they flew;  
Or, disporting on the water,  
Oft she sculled her bark canoe.  
And by arrow, swiftly speeding,  
As to mark it straightly wends,  
Doe and fawn were often trophies  
Alice bagged, near Old Vincennes.

## III.

Ere the battle's smoke o'er Sackville  
By the winds were rolled away,  
Lithely sped the maid, unhindered,  
With her flag to crown the fray;  
Then, to mast rope tightly fastened,  
Up Old Glory high ascends,  
Waving back a kiss to Alice,  
Heroine of Old Vincennes.

## IV.

Mem'ry, often, us will carry  
On the wings of busy thought  
Back to early years, when Freedom  
'Gainst its foes in triumph fought;  
Not a spot should now be dearer  
To the hearts of Freedom's friends  
Than the village, Che-pe-ko-ke,  
Home of Alice—Old Vincennes!





















